

S E R M O N S

PREACHED AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST. JOHN, MANCHESTER;

On the following Subjects.

The Marks and Characters of
True Faith considered.

The Book of Life; or the Na-
ture and Circumstances of a
future Judgment opened and
explained.

The True Christian's Progress
to Perfection; with particular
Application to Baptism and
the Lord's Supper

The Necessity, Nature and Man-
ner of Spiritual Purification
opened and explained.

The Nature, Operation and Ef-
fect of the Divine Leaven
opened and explained.

Brotherly Love considered as the
Sign and Proof of the Chris-
tian's Growth in Divine Grace.

The True Ground and Nature of
Spiritual Beauty and Deformity
opened and explained.

The True Ground and Nature of
Heavenly Wisdom opened and
explained.

By the Rev. JOHN CLOWES.

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THE
MARKS AND CHARACTERS
OF A

TRUE FAITH

CONSIDERED

IN SIX SERMONS.

SERMON I.

ST. MARK xvi, 17, 18.

And these Signs shall follow them that believe; in my NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

IT was sound and sober advice of the Apostle to his Corinthian brethren, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."* Every sincere Christian, who is

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* II Cor. xii. 3

in real earnest about his salvation, will find himself frequently led to follow this advice. He will consider well whether he be a TRUE believer, or not; he will know and perceive that there is the greatest danger of being mistaken in this matter; he will search out therefore all the marks, signs, and characters of a REAL FAITH; he will examine himself ATTENTIVELY by these marks, signs, and characters; thus he will endeavour to PROVE himself, whether he be a REAL, or only PRETENDED disciple of Jesus Christ; for he will be taught, that at this day there are Christians SO CALLED of both these descriptions; and that it is no easy matter to distinguish between the one and the other: being impelled however with the most ardent desire to avoid all delusion in a matter of such infinite importance, and to be found in the number of the faithful and true servants of God, he will never rest till he hath separated between the TRUE and the FALSE, the REAL and the PRETENDED, the SINCERE and the HYPOCRITICAL, and thus comes to a foundation of solid comfort in his own mind, by being established in a true gospel faith.

I trust, beloved, that in the number of those to whom I am now addressing myself, there are many who have been led to the above serious examination, and this from an earnest concern about their eternal peace. It is for the sake of such, that I have

have now chosen the words of my text for the subject of our consideration, inasmuch as they contain a declaration, from the mouth of TRUTH ITSELF, of the indisputable marks, signs, and characters, of a true faith. Every one therefore hath here a sure and certain standard whereby to examine himself; and every one, who will examine himself sincerely, may discover of a certainty whether he be a believer, or not; whether he hath REAL faith, or hath only the NAME and APPEARANCE thereof.

“ These signs shall follow them that believe; in
 “ MY NAME shall they cast out devils; they shall
 “ speak with new tongues; they shall take up ser-
 “ pents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it
 “ shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the
 “ sick, and they shall recover.”

But methinks I hear the carnal mind object—
 What! Is this the only mark and sign of true
 faith to do all these miracles? Is it not possible to
 be a believer without working such wondrous
 works? The Apostles, and first Christians had
 indeed this power, in and through the name of
 JESUS CHRIST, but was this power intended to be
 given unto Christians in all ages? Shall we at this
 day think OF CASTING OUT DEVILS, OF SPEAKING
 WITH NEW TONGUES, OF TAKING UP SERPENTS,
 OF NOT BEING HURT BY DRINKING DEADLY
 THINGS, OF RESTORING THE SICK TO HEALTH

AND LIFE? Surely these signs of a true faith are not now to be looked for; they were intended only for the infant church of Christ; we have nothing to do with them, and our faith may still be true and saving, though it is not distinguished by any of the above characters.

I am well aware that such objections have been raised, and are still raised, against the signs of a true faith pointed out in my text, as applied to Christians in LATER ages, and therefore before we proceed to consider the nature of those signs, it may be expedient to say somewhat in answer to the above objections.

And first. Every serious considerate person will find a full and satisfactory answer to the above objections in the decisive and peremptory manner in which our Lord expresses himself on the occasion: "These signs (says he) shall follow them that believe." Observe; in these words of our Lord there is no limitation of time or persons; he does not say, these signs shall follow my FIRST disciples, those that FIRST believe on my name; he does not say they shall be confined to the APOSTLES, or to the EARLY ages of Christianity; but he says in general, "These signs shall follow them that believe;" by which is certainly implied, them that believe in all ages, in all times and places; for surely if he had not meant this, he would have said so; he would have fixed a time when

when these signs should have ceased; he would have declared expressly, These signs shall follow the faith of such and such persons during such and such a time, but then my followers are no longer to look for, or to expect them; then these signs shall cease. Our Lord however has fixed no such time; he has not confined these signs of a true belief to any particular set of persons, and therefore we must be forced to conclude, that he intended them to remain as everlasting signs and tests of faith unto the remotest ages of his church.

But secondly—In the above objections it is urged, if these are to be considered as the signs of a true faith, then every believer in Jesus Christ must be endued with the power of working miracles, and this surely the Lord could never intend to be any mark or character of a true faith.

To this I answer—If our faith be not a faith CAPABLE OF WORKING MIRACLES, it is then no faith at all; it hath nothing at all divine in it; it is merely human, from ourselves, and not from God. Hereby therefore we may know and try our faith of what sort it is, whether it be from above or from beneath, from heaven or from ourselves. If it be from beneath, or from ourselves, it will have no miraculous virtue in it, but if it be from above or from heaven, that is, from the Lord of heaven; if it be a faith in and from the name of Jesus Christ. it will then assuredly be a MIRACLE-WORKING

faith, it will do many wonderful works, and this as sure as there is truth in these words of the Lord, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."†

But it will be asked, what are these MIRACLES? what are these GREATER WORKS, which must be the fruits of a true faith in and from the Lord Jesus Christ?

The question is of unspeakable importance to every Christian. The answer to it is short, but, if well attended to, will be found most edifying.

MIRACLES and WONDERFUL WORKS are considered in general only in relation to what is **SO-DILLY** or **MATERIAL**, and through a superficial attention, or rather indolent inattention to the true sense and meaning of what is **MIRACULOUS**, we are accustomed never to pronounce any thing a **MIRACLE**, but when we observe some extraordinary change wrought in the **ACCIDIES** of men, or in the world of **MATTER**.

Thus we should think it a great miracle to see a blind man made to see, a lame man to walk, a deaf man to hear, a dumb man to speak, a dead man to live; or to see a mountain raised from its foundation and cast into the sea, or to see the sea itself divided, and "the waters thereof standing on an heap," as was the case when the Israelites went through the Red Sea on dry ground.

These,

Serm. I. ON TRUE FAITH.

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These, I say, we call great miracles and wondrous works; and indeed so they are, and bear indisputable testimony to a divine supernatural power, without which they never could be wrought.

Let it however be well remembered, without any disparagement to these miracles wrought upon the **BODIES** of men, and upon the **OUTWARD MATERIAL** world, that there are also miracles, or wondrous works of another sort, viz. such as are wrought upon the **SPIRITS** of men, and take place in what may be called man's **SPIRITUAL** **WORLD**.

As for example—if it be a great miracle that a man blind as to his **BODILY** sight is made to see, it is surely a miracle equally great, that a man blind as to his **SPIRITUAL** sight is made to see; the same is true of the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the dead; the miracle is equally great, whether performed upon those who fall under this description as to their **SPIRITS**, or as to their **BODIES**. So in respect to **REMOVING MOUNTAINS**, and **DIVIDING THE WATERS OF THE DEEP**; it is full as great a miracle, and as wondrous a work, and as sure a proof of Omnipotence, to remove in man's heart the **MOUNTAINS*** of pride, of vanity, of self-love, and
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* See Isaiah ii. 14. xli. 15. xlii. 15. Jerem. xlii. 16. Ezech. vi. 2. 3. xxxviii. 8. 20. Micah i. 4. vi. 1. 2. Hab. iii. 6. 13. and many others.

ON TRUE FAITH. Serm. I.

the love of the world; and to divide in him the waters of spiritual trouble, affliction and temptation:† These I say are full as great and signal miracles as when done in a NATURAL way, and are as sure indisputable signs of the power of God, without which it is not possible they should be effected.

From this view then of the real and true nature of miracles, it will appear plain to every considerate person, that all true faith, as being a divine gift, and attended therefore with a divine power, must needs be endued with a MIRACLE-WORKING virtue, and that, if it had not such a virtue in it, it could not be any blessing, or convey any real good unto the soul of man, inasmuch as nothing can be a blessing or convey good to man, but what helps him to a change of nature, giving him new eyes, new ears, a new tongue, new feet, a new life, which cannot possibly be effected but by a supernatural and consequently miracle-working power from above.

Let it therefore no longer be imagined, that Christians at this day are not to look for a miraculous power as the sign and test of a true faith, for if we have not this sign and test, we cannot have a surer proof that our faith is not true; if we have never yet “cast out devils;” if we have
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† See Isaiah xliii. 2. Lam. iii. 34. Psalm lxix. 2. cxxiv. 4. 5. and other places.

never yet "spoke with new tongues;" if we have never yet escaped "hurt from drinking deadly things;" if we have never yet "laid hands on the sick, and they have recovered," If, I say, we have never yet experienced the power of faith in and from the Lord Jesus Christ, in working these miracles in our own hearts and lives, (which are the real and most substantial miracles, and what our Lord calls GREATER WORKS than what he himself did) we have then every reason in the world to be convinced that we are lacking in the true signs and characters of a gospel faith.

I am well aware that this idea of faith and its operations will be charged by some as tending to ENTHUSIASM and FANATICISM, and will be deemed a wild departure from the soberness of gospel wisdom. This charge is to be expected from all those who have been accustomed to regard faith as a mere act of the understanding only, assenting to some particular system of doctrines and opinions, not as a divine power operating from the fountain of heavenly life and love, and tending to form that life, and bring forth the blessed fruits of that love, in all who receive it and live accordingly. But a like charge may, with equal reason, be urged against a belief in any of the great doctrines of the gospel, as in the doctrine of the purification, renewal, and regeneration of the human soul, in the doctrine of the resurrection,

surrection, in the doctrine of the operation of divine grace on the minds of men, all which imply a divine and heavenly-working power, and at the same time some marvellous and MIRACULOUS change, wrought thereby on the human spirit. Let us not then be deterred by NAMES, from acknowledging and holding fast by the REALITIES of gospel truth. It may be deemed enthusiasm and fanaticism by some, to believe our bibles, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God and Saviour, but shall we on that account reject two such important articles of our faith? In like manner it may be deemed enthusiasm and fanaticism to call faith a SUPER-NATURAL power, and to expect from it SUPER-NATURAL effects, but shall we on this account degrade our faith and it's operations into what is merely natural and human? Sound and sober reason surely requires, that we should rather labour to form to ourselves just notions of the extraordinary and divine excellence of this "gift of God"* to us, remembering well, that we are exposed to far greater mischiefs by LESSENING the high value thereof, than by OVER-RATING it; and that it may tend alike to enthusiasm and fanaticism to BELIEVE TOO LITTLE, as to BELIEVE (if such a thing can be) TOO MUCH. A faith merely natural and speculative, composed of opi-

* Ephes. ii. 8.

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nions and forms of words, and consisting merely in an assent of the understanding to some particular code of doctrinal tenets, but void of heavenly life and heavenly power, hath too long prevailed in the church, to the lamentable extirpation of all solid wisdom, piety, and good life. Many suffer infinite hurt by such a faith as this, and are betrayed by it into the most dangerous spirit of disorder, enthusiasm, and fanaticism, without suspecting it's mischiefs. For enthusiasm, fanaticism, and every other disorder of the mind, it is well to be noted, take their rise either from some mistaken ideas of the nature of God, or from a defect of obedience to the commandments of God: they are the natural offspring either of a blind understanding or of a corrupt heart, or of both united they can therefore only be remedied and removed by a RIGHT FAITH, and a conformity of life thereto. Would we then avoid such enthusiasm, fanaticism, and every other disorder of heart and understanding, and attain to a true sobriety and purity of gospel wisdom, let us ponder well the heavenly nature and operations of a right gospel faith; let us be careful to acquire JUST ideas of it's intrinsic and divine excellence; let us set no limits to it's MARVELLOUS and MIRACULOUS power and efficacy, because no such limits are warranted in holy scripture, which declares "all things to be
" possible

"possible to him that believeth."* For this happy purpose, let us now proceed to consider the genuine signs, marks, and characters of an evangelical faith, as the Lord himself hath declared them unto us, first praying most earnestly, and in all humility and contrition of heart, according to the spirit of that prevailing prayer of old, "Lord I believe, HELP THOU mine unbelief:† and also of that of the apostles, "Lord INCREASE our faith,"‡ AMEN.

* Mark ix. 23.

† Mark ix. 24.

‡ Luke xvii. 5.

SERMON

S E R M O N I I.

ST. MARK xvi, 17, 18.

These Signs shall follow them that believe; in my NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

HAVING shewn in the preceding discourse on these words, that they were not intended to be confined to the EARLY times of the gospel, but are to be considered as an infallible mark and test of true faith amongst Christians in ALL ages and places, without exception, I shall now proceed to explain the nature of each particular sign here mentioned by our blessed Lord as characteristic of the true believer.

And first. "In my name shall they cast out devils."

I am well aware that many at this day, who call themselves Christians, will think it strange to hear of this SIGN of a true faith, and will be greatly

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surprized when they are told, that they cannot be real believers, unless in "the name of Jesus Christ" they cast out devils."

This surprize and strangeness however can only be owing, either to their not having considered, or not having believed, the doctrine of the Word of God respecting DEVILS; for when once this doctrine is rightly received and understood, it will then appear most plain and true, that every true believer in Jesus Christ must needs IN HIS NAME CAST OUT DEVILS.

Before then we proceed to a further explanation of the SIGN before us, it may be expedient to consider what the holy Scriptures teach us on this subject concerning DEVILS.

Now we learn from the oracles of truth, that DEVILS are wicked and lying spirits, who have their abodes in the kingdom of hell and darkness, where they live for ever separate from God in unutterable misery.

We learn further from the same source of truth, that these DEVILS, or wicked spirits, are near unto man; that they have power to tempt and assault him; that they have their abode and delight in all man's evil affections; that therefore they dwell and unite themselves with all who live in evil; and that it is their greatest satisfaction (if we may call it a satisfaction) to defile and destroy the souls
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of men, by leading them into sin, and turning their hearts and understandings from God and heaven.

Thus our Lord, in the parable of the tares of the field, represents the devil as sowing tares amongst the wheat; "the enemy (saith he) that sowed them is the devil;* by tares are here signified all wicked and false suggestions in the hearts of men; by wheat, all good, and holy influences of love and truth from Jesus Christ.

Again, in another place he represents the devil as depriving man of the Word of divine truth whereby he should be saved—"then cometh the devil (saith he) and taketh the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."† The word here is the holy truth of God, which the devil opposeth in man, because it is opposite to, and destructive of him, and his kingdom.

To the same purpose St. Peter represents the devil "walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;‡" and St. Paul stiles him "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;"§ and accordingly St. John saith, that "whosoever com-mitteth sin is of the devil;"|| and hence come various exhortations and admonitions, as where it is said, "Neither give place to the devil;"‡ and

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* Matt. xiii. 39. † Luke viii. 12. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 8. § Ephes. ii. 2.
 || 1 John, iii. 8. † Ephes. iv. 27.

by another apostle, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."†

Agreeable to this testimony of holy scripture, our church teaches us to pray, that we may be delivered "from the craft and assaults of the devil;" and in the office of baptism, when the child is signed with the sign of the cross, it is added, "In token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil."

From all this weight of evidence then we are plainly taught, not only who and what DEVILS are, but also that there is a nearer communication between them and our hearts, than many of us are apt to imagine, inasmuch as from the above scriptures it is most evident, that they have power to assault us with their evil influences and false delusive persuasions; they have power also to destroy us, if we do not watch against and resist them; they have power finally to make us their children, by leading us to forget God, and to delight in evil as they themselves do.

This is a subject, alas! which in general is little considered by many, who still profess to believe in the holy scriptures, and who join in the daily prayers of the church against the CRAFT AND

ASSAULTS

† James iv. 7.

ASSAULTS OF THE DEVIL. The case is, there is a mighty difference between receiving a doctrine, and giving a blind assent to it, on the testimony of others, and being convinced of it by a testimony in our own hearts, arising from a real and thorough persuasion of it's truth, as we come to live by the practice of it.

Let me then, beloved, earnestly recommend to you, as a matter of the utmost importance to your eternal peace, no longer to receive this doctrine concerning DEVILS, merely on the testimony of others, but to come into a practical belief and conviction of it in your own hearts and lives. For this purpose let me counsel you to believe and consider well, that wherever EVIL is, there also the DEVIL is, there also HELL is; for whether we speak of EVIL, of HELL, or the DEVIL, it is the same thing, inasmuch as it is not possible they should ever be separated or put asunder. There cannot therefore be mentioned a single bad passion, lust, or affection of man's heart, but what is influenced by, and in connection with, the DEVIL or the spirits of darkness. Are we proud? are we covetous? are we wrathful? are we sensual? are we impatient? do we hate and despise our neighbours? do we love ourselves better than others? do we love this world and the flesh better than God and his righteousness? are we envious, ma-

licious, liars, adulterers, blasphemers, or the slaves of any other unchristian affection? We cannot have a surer proof, whilst we delight in such things, that our hearts are ONE with our great adversary, and that he dwelleth in us, and ruleth us by the spirit of his abominations.

From this scripture account then of the nature of devils, and of their near communication with man, it will appear plain to every considerate person, how THIS SIGN FOLLOWETH all the believers in Jesus Christ, "in my name they shall cast out devils."

For it is an essential character of true gospel faith, that IT WORKETH BY LOVE;* and love, we are assured by our Lord consisteth IN KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS;† and the great law of the commandments is, TO DEPART FROM EVIL;‡ and to depart from evil, is to depart from, to renounce, and to CAST OUT DEVILS, inasmuch as we have just now shewn, EVIL and the DEVIL are ONE, and therefore if EVIL be cast out, by renouncing and departing from it, the DEVIL must needs be cast out at the same time.

There is indeed what is by some CALLED faith, (but it is to be much lamented that it is so called) which is not attended with this power of renouncing, rejecting, and casting out of EVIL, that is, the
DEVIL;

* Galat. v. 6. † John xiv. 21, 23. ‡ Job xxviii. 28, Psalm xxxiv. 13, 14.

DEVIL; thus some say they have faith, and that they believe in Jesus Christ, who yet live in much sin and evil, never examining themselves concerning it, much less making opposition to it. It is greatly to be feared, there are many who call themselves Christians, who yet rest content with such a fruitless and dead faith as this; who will name the holy name of Jesus Christ with their LIPS, and yet in their HEARTS AND LIVES deny him, being lovers of themselves and of the world, despisers of others, living in divers vanities and false pleasures, the slaves of evil affections, being proud, covetous, wrathful, sensual, impatient, unmerciful, and the like; giving hereby a melancholy proof, that they were never yet truly converted unto the LIVING God, the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts, and that they therefore want the SIGN of a true faith as delivered by Jesus Christ, "In my name shall they cast out devils."

But, beloved, permit me to warn you most earnestly against the folly, unprofitableness, and dangerous tendencies of such a faith as this. For this purpose consider well, and digest thoroughly in your hearts, this essential sign and character of a true and saving faith, "In my name they shall cast out devils." Learn to reduce this into practice; believe and be persuaded that DEVILS, or evil spirits, dwell in every evil, lawless, and unsanctified affection and lust: make it habitual to you to
examine

examine yourselves, and search out in your hearts such lusts and affections; consider every desire and thought of your minds, whether it be according to the love of God and your neighbour, or contrary thereto; if it be contrary thereto, then assure yourselves it is from the DEVIL, and that the spirits of darkness are therein; here then begin with setting up the STANDARD of a divine faith; here enlist yourselves under the BANNER of JESUS CHRIST; here TAKE UNTO YOU THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD; here approve yourselves faithful soldiers by FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH; for by this will it be clearly seen whether your faith is of God and a true faith, or whether it is of yourselves only, that is, no faith at all.

If it be of yourselves only, it will leave you the slaves and servants of sin and concupiscence, and you will attain to no dominion over evil, because you will make no resistance thereto; but if it be of God, that is, of Jesus Christ, you will be enabled, through this HIGH AND HOLY NAME, to overcome all evil; you will gain the victory over every selfish, sensual, worldly, and sinful affection, that is contrary to the pure love of the Lord and of your neighbour; by charity you will conquer and CAST OUT all malice and hatred, by humility you will CAST OUT pride, by contentedness you will CAST OUT covetousness, by meekness wrath, by
mercy

mercy unmercifulness, by the love of God the love of yourselves and of this world; you will thus SIT WITH JESUS CHRIST ON HIS THRONE; you will have power and dominion from him over all your enemies; you will in short CAST OUT DEVILS, and be convinced thereby to your everlasting comfort, that you are true FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB; thus through the omnipotent power of him who loveth you, ye will be enabled sooner or later to join in this song of the ever blessed, "Now is
" come salvation and strength, and the kingdom
" of our God, and the power of his Christ, for
" the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which
" accused them before our God day and night.*

And may the most merciful Lord, the great Creator, Redeemer, and Lover of the souls of men, give us all grace to examine well our hearts and lives concerning THIS SIGN of a true faith, that so we may make no mistakes in a matter of such importance to us.

* Rev. xii. 10.

S E R M O N

 SERMON III.

ST. MARK xvi. 17. 18.

These Signs shall follow them that believe; in my NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

HAVING already shewn in the two preceding discourses, how the signs of a true faith here mentioned by our Lord were intended to be applied to all Christians alike in all ages, and what is to be understood by the first sign, viz. CASTING OUT DEVILS, I shall now proceed to a consideration of the second sign, as signified in these words, "In my name they shall speak with new tongues."

I am well aware that this sign, like the foregoing, is considered by the generality of Christians at this day, as belonging only to the Apostles, and first Teachers of Christianity, who alone, as it is commonly

commonly supposed, could CAST OUT DEVILS, and SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; but that this sign was intended as a distinguishing character of true faith amongst Christians of all ages, and therefore ought to be expected and looked for by all the followers of Jesus Christ, as a sure proof and test of their being his followers, will appear plainly from these two considerations:

First, What is here to be understood by a NEW TONGUE; and

Secondly, How and why a true faith in Jesus Christ must of necessity lead every believer to SPEAK WITH A NEW TONGUE.

First, Then let us enquire what is here to be understood by a NEW TONGUE; and may the blessed spirit of Him who signified to us this sign of a true faith, direct all our hearts and minds in this enquiry!

We find frequent mention made in holy Scripture of a NEW HEART, which man is said to receive by regeneration.

Few consider aright what is meant by this NEW HEART, and yet there is nothing else wanting to make us see clearly what is meant by a NEW TONGUE.

For as the HEART of man becomes NEW only by receiving and being formed by a NEW spirit, which is the spirit of love and charity from God,
even

even so the TONGUE of man becomes NEW, by speaking from and according to a NEW spirit.

Every man's tongue, we well know, speaks from some inward spirit or principle, or other, in his heart, according to those words of the Lord, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh:"* If this spirit, or principle then be that of the OLD or unregenerate man; if it be only according to this world and the flesh; if it hath never been brought into subjection to the holy spirit of God; the tongue in this case must needs be UNRENEWED, and may properly be called an OLD TONGUE, just as an unrenewed man is called an OLD MAN; but if the spirit or principle, from which the tongue speaks, be that of the NEW and regenerate man; if it be under the influence of love and charity, righteousness and truth from God; the tongue in this case must needs be a RENEWED TONGUE, and may properly be called a NEW TONGUE, just as a RENEWED HEART is called a NEW HEART.

Here then every enlightened eye will be enabled to see clearly what is meant by a NEW TONGUE: a NEW TONGUE is that which speaks from a NEW HEART, and according to the spirit of a NEW HEART; a NEW TONGUE therefore is that which speaks from God, and under the influence of a divine

* Matt. xii. 34.

divine spirit from God, because a NEW HEART is from God, and under the influence of his spirit; a NEW TONGUE again always speaks the truth, and nothing but the truth, because GOD IS TRUTH, and speaking from God, it must of necessity speak the truth; a NEW TONGUE again speaks no evil, because evil is contrary to God, and therefore the tongue which speaks from God, cannot possibly speak evil: a new tongue again always speaks with a view to edification, because speaking from a heart devoted to God and seeking his glory, it must ever be influenced by some good end and design in whatever it speaks: finally, a NEW TONGUE ever speaks the language of love and charity, of sound wisdom and discretion; NO CORRUPT COMMUNICATION PROCEEDETH FROM IT, BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD TO THE USE OF EDIFYING, THAT IT MAY MINISTER GRACE UNTO THE HEARERS; it is ever obedient to the spirit of God in the heart; it never speaks but from and according to the dictates of that spirit; the tongue of the OLD MAN, we know, speaks according to and from the spirit of the old man, which is his own spirit, and not the spirit of God; but the tongue of the NEW MAN, which is the NEW TONGUE, speaks from and according to the spirit of the NEW MAN, which is the spirit of love and wisdom from God; and therefore all it's speech and language and words and discourse are NEW,

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partaking

partaking of a NEW spirit and a NEW quality from God : let it not however here be understood as if the new tongue was always speaking ABOUT God and holy things ; for if occasion requires, it can speak about the things of this world, as well as the tongue of the old man ; but then herein is an essential difference between the OLD TONGUE and the NEW TONGUE ; the OLD TONGUE speaks about the things of this world from a worldly spirit, which is the love of this world ; whereas the NEW TONGUE, when it speaks about worldly things, speaks not in and from a worldly spirit, but from a RENEWED SPIRIT, even that spirit WHICH OVERCOMETH THE WORLD.

Having thus then considered what we are to understand by a NEW TONGUE, I shall now proceed to shew, secondly, how and why a true faith in Jesus Christ must of necessity lead every true believer TO SPEAK WITH A NEW TONGUE.

It has been already shewn, in a former discourse, how a true faith operates to CASTING OUT DEVILS, that is to the removing from the heart and life of man all those evils which are contrary to love and charity, by leading men to renounce and reject such evils.

A true faith then must of consequence lead every sincere believer to speak with a NEW TONGUE, inasmuch as whoever sincerely renounces evil in his heart, because it is contrary to God and his

his neighbour, he receiveth a NEW HEART from God: and whosoever hath a NEW HEART, as we have just now seen, he must of necessity speak with a NEW TONGUE.

Let me entreat, beloved, with all possible earnestness, your most serious attention to this consideration.

The slightest knowledge of the gospel may serve to convince you, that you cannot be true believers unless you are RENEWED in the spirit of your HEARTS; and that you cannot be renewed in the spirit of your hearts, only so far as you search out and examine those evils in your hearts, which are contrary to the love of God and of your neighbour, and having discovered them, are sincere in renouncing them.

In such case, the Lord will create in you a NEW HEART, and a NEW TONGUE will then follow of course; you will speak a NEW Speech, a NEW language, NEW words, and NEW discourse; because you will ever speak from a NEW HEART, that is from a NEW SPIRIT in your heart.

Behold here and adore the gracious designs of Jesus Christ and his gospel towards man!

Man's TONGUE, as well as his heart, is, in his fallen or natural state, exceedingly corrupt, inasmuch as it partakes of the corruptions of his heart; in the language of the Apostle, it is SET ON FIRE

OF HELL,* it is the servant of sin, of vanity and concupiscence; it is thus at enmity with God and his righteousness, and it is frequently the unhappy cause of separating man further from heaven; but no sooner does the spirit of Jesus Christ and his gospel enter the heart of the true believer than it exerts it's blessed influence immediately on the TONGUE also; as it creates in man a NEW heart, so it helps him to speak a NEW language; all his words are then words of love, of charity, of peace and righteousness; his tongue is no longer SET ON FIRE OF HELL, but it is under the influence of the holy spirit of God; thus the enmity between God and the tongue is destroyed, and MAN WITH HIS MOUTH GLORIFIES GOD, edifies his neighbour, and advances his own salvation.

Speech, language, or discourse, was intended as one of the noblest privileges of our natures; as that which distinguishes us in a particular manner from the brutes; it was designed to be a source of most delightful satisfactions; we are hereby enabled to communicate our thoughts one to another for mutual entertainment and edification.

But let it well be remembered, that this privilege of our natures, so distinguishing and so important, may become a CURSE to us, as well as a blessing, if we are not careful to use it aright.

Our Lord hath intimated this to us in these most
awful

* St. James iii. 6.

awful words, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."† Oh terrible declaration to all those who are careless about their words, from what ground and from what spirit they proceed! But oh blessed and comfortable declaration to all those, who are careful to examine well the spring and fountain of their speech, that so it may be brought under obedience to the spirit of Jesus!

"By thy words thou shalt be justified." It is the blessed privilege of the true believer, that he can thus speak words which JUSTIFY, inasmuch as putting away all evil from his heart and life, he speaketh with a NEW TONGUE, from a NEW HEART, that is, from God; all his words therefore are words which JUSTIFY him, that is, which tend to purify and make him more righteous in the sight of God; inasmuch as they come from God and they lead him to God; they speak the glory of God; they are edifying to others; they are a source of infinite delight to himself, for having respect to God and the good of his neighbour in them, he finds in all his words an unction of heavenly peace and comfort to his own mind.

But it is otherwise with those who do not well examine and consider from what source or fountain their words proceed; of such it is awfully true, "By thy words thou shalt be condemned," inas-

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much

* Matt. xii. 27.

much as speaking only from themselves and their own spirit, all their words, even though they be good and holy words, partake of the evil unregenerate spirit of their hearts, and thus separate them further from the purity and peace of the holy Spirit of God.

To conclude.—It is written in the Prophet, “In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan,”* and in another place, “Then will I turn to the people a pure language.”†—From these and many other similar passages of scripture we learn, that it is the great and blessed intent of God and religion to man, to enable him to speak a NEW LANGUAGE, or as it is here called, the LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, and a PURE LANGUAGE; or as it is expressed in my text, “To speak with a new tongue.”

This blessed end of the dispensations of God to man was represented and confirmed by that memorable sign of CLOVEN FIERY TONGUES which appeared to and sat upon the Apostles at the day of Pentecost, whereby was signified, that under the administration and going forth of the power and spirit of the manifested Jehovah in the person of Jesus Christ operating in the hearts of men, the TONGUE OR LANGUAGE of man should partake of it's divine efficacy, and should be a tongue or language

* Isaiah xix. 18.

† Zeph. iii. 9.

guage, animated with the fire of heaven, that is, with an heavenly love and charity.

Oh then that we were all diligent to fulfill this design of God and his holy religion to us, that so we might become partakers of all it's blessedness! oh that for this purpose we did but seriously consider, whether we have this sign of a true faith; and as seriously lay to heart that we cannot possibly be true believers only so far as we have this sign, and begin thereby to speak, with NEW TONGUES, THE LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, THE PURE LANGUAGE!

This new TONGUE, this LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, this PURE LANGUAGE we have already shewn, is from God, that is, from the grace and spirit of God in the NEW HEART of the sincere Christian. Do we wish then to speak with this NEW TONGUE, the LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, the PURE LANGUAGE? do we wish to know this SIGN of a true faith? do we wish thus to be JUSTIFIED AND NOT CONDEMNED BY OUR WORDS? do we wish that all our words and discourse may be of God, and lead us to God? let us then follow this plain gospel rule, and we cannot possibly any of us fail of this infinite blessedness; let us search out and put away from our hearts and lives that spirit of selfish and worldly love which is opposite to the love of Jesus Christ and our neighbour; let us shun all sin as contrary to God and his commandments; let us believe

believe in and apply to Jesus Christ as our God, and Redeemer, and Regenerator: let us form our lives by his spirit: we shall then soon find our TONGUES, OUR SPEECH and LANGUAGE influenced thereby; for having our hearts ever turned from ourselves to Jesus Christ, we shall soon find Jesus Christ and his love in our hearts; our hearts will thus become NEW, and ruled by a NEW spirit; and in proportion as our hearts are thus renewed, we shall attain to the infinite blessedness of speaking with NEW TONGUES THE LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, and a PURE LANGUAGE.

SER.

 SERMON IV.

ST. MARK xvi. 17. 18.

These Signs shall follow them that believe; in my NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

HAVING already considered the two first signs of a true faith here spoken of, viz. THE CASTING OUT DEVILS, and the SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES, I shall now proceed, as I proposed, to a consideration of the third sign, viz. the TAKING UP OF SERPENTS, and shew how this sign ever follows the true believer in the name of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The nature and meaning of this sign cannot be known, unless it be understood, first, what is here meant by SERPENTS; and secondly, what is meant by TAKING UP serpents.

These two enquiries then shall be the subject of my present discourse; and may the God of mercy,
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who giveth understanding, and who openeth the eyes of man TO SEE THE WONDROUS THINGS OF HIS LAW, open the eyes of all amongst us, that we may be enabled to discern herein that light of eternal life and truth, which may be profitable to our salvation!

Every serious and attentive reader of the holy scripture must needs have observed, that the various principles, parts, and powers, which enter into the constitution of man, are in those holy records not only compared to various animals here on earth, but are also called by the names of such animals.

Thus our Lord himself is frequently called a LAMB, and THE LAMB OF GOD,* to denote his holy innocence; he is also called in other places a LION,† to denote his great power and might. And thus all his true followers are called SHEEP and also LAMBS,‡ to denote their purity, goodness, and innocence, which they receive from the Lord.

On the other hand, the devil, we find, who is of a nature opposite to the Lord and to innocence, is called a BEAR and a WOLF,§ by reason of his continual desire to destroy what is good; at other times

* See Isaiah xvi. 1. Ilii. 7. Jer. xi. 19. John i. 29. and the Revelations throughout.

† See Gen. xlix. 9. 10. Hosea v. 14. xlii. 7. 8. Rev. v. 5. x. 3.

‡ See Isaiah, liii. 6. Psalm lxxix. 13. c. 3. John x. throughout. Chap. xxi. 15, 16, 17.

§ See Lam. iii. 10. Isaiah xi. 7. Amos v. 19. Jer. v. 6. John x. 12.

times he is described by the names of poisonous and subtle animals, and is called a SERPENT, a DRAGON, an ADDER, and the like,* to denote his poisonous artifice and cunning subtlety, whereby he deceives and destroys men's souls.

In like manner all wicked men, who may be called devils in human forms, are named by similar names with the devil himself; thus John the Baptist, and also the Lord call the Sadducees and Pharisees a GENERATION OF VIPERS;† and thus, when our Lord speaks of Herod, who sought to kill him, he calls him a FOX, "Go ye, saith he to the Pharisees, and tell THAT FOX, behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected,"‡ thus also the carnal and sensual are frequently named dogs, "Many dogs (saith the psalmist) are come about me,"§ speaking of his temptations and assaults from the wicked. "Beware of dogs,||" saith the Apostle, speaking of the sensual and carnal-minded, who opposed the purity of his doctrine; and in the Revelations, where mention is made of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, it is written, "Without are dogs, and forcerers, and adulterers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie,"¶ where

DOGS

* See Gen. iii. 1, 13. Psalm xci. 13. cxl. 2. Isaiah xxvii. 1. Rev. xii. 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, and many places. † Matt. iii. 7. xii. 34. Luke iii. 7.
‡ Luke xiii. 32. § Psalm xxii. 16. || Philip iii. 2. ¶ Rev. xxii. 15.

dogs denote those who immerse their affections in the delights of sense, or of the carnal nature.

Numberless other examples might here be adduced, would the time permit, of this method of speaking used in the holy Scriptures, or Word of God, whereby the spiritual principles, parts, and powers, which enter into the constitution of man, are not only compared to, but are also called by the names of such animals, as in their natures correspond to such principles, parts, and powers. Those however which have been already mentioned, will, I trust, be sufficient for our present purpose.

From this method of speaking then, so familiar and common in the holy Scriptures, every enlightened eye will be enabled clearly to discern what we are to understand by SERPENTS in the words of my text. The serpent, we all know, is an animal of a very SUBTLE and CUNNING nature, in many cases POISONOUS, which is not elevated above the earth like other animals, but creeps or crawls on the ground, and hides itself in holes and clefts of the earth, from whence it frequently darts forth to the terror and destruction of man and other creatures.

Hence this animal most fitly denotes the SENSUAL MAN, or the sensual part and principle in the life of man. For this sensual part or principle, we all know by experience, is of a very cunning and
subtle

subtle nature, deluding and deceiving man by appearances and false persuasions, as it is written of the serpent which tempted and deceived Eve, that "he was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord had made;"* it is also in many cases POISONOUS, infecting and destroying the spiritual or heavenly life in man; it creeps likewise on the ground, is in close connection with earthly and worldly things, delighting itself with them, immersing itself in them, and thence causing much terror, and often bringing destruction to man's superior parts and principles, that is, to the inner man; thus it's operations are still the same that they were in old time, in the days of our first parents, who were seduced hereby, and lost paradise; it is ever tempting us TO EAT OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT, TO forget God and his kingdom, to love this world only, and the things thereof, whereby it causeth in many of us also the loss of paradise.

But this signification of the word SERPENT will more plainly appear, if we proceed to consider, secondly, what is meant by TAKING UP SERPENTS.

From this expression, "They shall take up SERPENTS," it must be very evident to every considerate and attentive mind, that our Lord, by SERPENTS, could never mean real natural serpents,

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* Gen. iii. 1.

such as we see in this natural world; for according to such meaning, what could be the signification of TAKING UP serpents? How could this be any sign of true faith? What end could it possibly answer for any one to have this sign? How few also would have it in their power to give this testimony of their faith? Besides, had the Lord here meant real SERPENTS, he would surely rather have spoken of TREADING THEM DOWN, or of escaping hurt from them, than of TAKING THEM UP.

It must then needs be, that our Lord by SERPENTS here meant to denote some part or principle in the life and constitution of man, and that it is the sensual part or principle which is here denoted by SERPENTS, will be most manifest from a right consideration of our Lord's expression in relation thereto, "They shall take up serpents."

For to TAKE UP any thing signifies to elevate, to exalt, to raise from a lower to a higher state; TO TAKE UP, in this sense, as applied to REAL serpents, can have little or no meaning, but when applied to what is signified by serpents, viz. THE SENSUAL PART OR PRINCIPLE IN THE LIFE OF MAN, it will then be found to have a meaning, full of importance, full of holiness, worthy of God to dictate, worthy of man to receive, expressive of the real power of a divine faith, and therefore highly proper to be enumerated amongst the true signs and characters of such a faith.

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“ In my name they shall take up serpents.”

May I bespeak your most earnest attention to the meaning of this expression, *THEY SHALL TAKE UP*, as applied to the sensual part or principle of the life of man, signified by serpents!

It is the great end of the gospel not to destroy the sensual principle in man, but to save and bless it, by elevating, by exalting, by raising or *TAKING IT UP* through the influence of the spiritual principle; and this happy end is effected, when man submits his sensual part, with all it's affections, to the rule and dominion of the spiritual part, and it's affections.

We all know that man's life consists of many parts or principles; they may in general be divided into two, the *SENSUAL* and the *SPIRITUAL*; the sensual is the lowest and outermost; the spiritual is the higher and innermost.

These two parts may be either divided or united; they are divided when man lives a sensual life *ALONE*, without living a spiritual life; they are united when man lives at the same time a spiritual life, and thereby hath rule and dominion over the sensual life; when they are divided, then the sensual life is hurtful, and brings destruction and condemnation to man, and is in this respect called a *SERPENT*, cunning and subtle, and poisonous, and creeping on the ground; but when they are united, that is, when spiritual life hath rule and pre-emi-

nence over the sensual life, then the sensual life is no longer hurtful; its poison is taken away from it; its cunning and subtlety are made subservient to higher wisdom; it becomes beneficial and blessed to man, and in this case it may be said to BE TAKEN UP, that is, to be elevated, exalted, and raised from a lower to a higher place.

As for example—The appetite for eating and drinking is a SENSUAL appetite, appertaining to the sensual life of man; if this appetite be separated from what is SPIRITUAL, it then becomes hurtful to man; it renders man carnal and gluttonous; it immerses his spirit in abominable filthy lusts; it is thus a POISONOUS SERPENT which deceives and destroys man: but if this appetite be placed under the rule and guidance of the spiritual principle in man; if, according to the apostle's advice, man EATS AND DRINKS TO THE GLORY OF GOD; if he consults herein the dictates of sober reason and religion: in this case the appetite for eating and drinking is elevated, it is exalted, it is the serpent TAKEN UP, and thus it is no longer poisonous and prejudicial, but blessed and profitable unto man.

And what is here said of eating and drinking, may easily be applied to all the other sensual appetites, and is equally true concerning them: whensoever they are separated from what is spiritual, that is, from the love and wisdom, the grace and spirit of God ruling over them, directing, regulating, elevating
and

and blessing them, they are then hurtful and deadly; they are then so many SERPENTS, DRAGONS, and POISONOUS ANIMALS, continually raising up their heads, shooting forth their fatal stings, and infecting with their deadly venom the spiritual and heavenly principles of man's internal and everlasting life: but whensoever on the contrary they are brought under the rule and dominion of spiritual life, that is, of the love and wisdom, the grace and spirit of God in man, then their former evil state is totally reversed; through the power of heavenly faith and love, they are then elevated; they no longer look downwards towards the world and the flesh, but they look upwards towards God and heaven; they are indeed still SERPENTS, but then they are serpents TAKEN UP, serpents deprived of their poison; thus they declare and manifest in man the mighty power of Jesus Christ, and are continual signs and proofs of that power, inasmuch as none but Jesus Christ, through a divine faith in him, can thus raise them up, deprive them of their poison, and make them thereby profitable and blessed, unto man.

To conclude—We read in the book of Exodus this remarkable relation concerning Moses, when he was expressing his doubts to the Lord respecting his testimony being received by the children of Israel, “They will not (saith he) believe me; for “they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto

“ thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is
 “ that in thine hand? And he said, a rod. And he
 “ said, cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the
 “ ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses
 “ fled from before it. And the Lord said unto
 “ Moses, put forth thine hand, and take it by the
 “ tail; and he put forth his hand, and caught it,
 “ and it became a rod in his hand.”*

Behold here a confirming testimony of what hath been just now observed in relation to the power of a divine faith in taking up serpents! By the ROD of Moses is here signified the power of such a faith; by this ROD becoming a SERPENT when it was CAST ON THE GROUND, is signified, that when the divine power in man is immersed and buried in things of this world and the flesh, it becomes merely sensual; by the SERPENT becoming a ROD AGAIN, when Moses caught it by the tail, is signified, the ELEVATION of the sensual principle through the power of a divine faith. Thus was it to be made known unto the children of Israel, that the Lord had appeared unto Moses, and that he was to lead them out of Egypt into the good land of Canaan.

May we also, beloved, seek for, and be convinced by the same SIGN, respecting our Moses, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, our great leader and deliverer

* Exod. iv. 1 to 8.

deliverer from spiritual Egypt to the heavenly Canaan! THE ROD IS IN HIS HAND, a divine power over us, and in us, to elevate us to himself, to raise up all our affections from things below, and to gather us into his kingdom. If we CAST THIS ROD TO THE GROUND; if we bury our affections merely in the things of time and sense, it will then become a SERPENT; we shall be mere SENSUAL men, accursed and separated from the divine presence, crawling on the ground, full of subtlety, and of all deadly poison; but if we will TAKE UP THIS SERPENT; if we will suffer the sensual affections to be ruled and elevated by the spiritual; the SERPENT will then become A ROD AGAIN IN OUR HANDS, even a rod of divine power, by which we shall have dominion over the lower things of time and sense, USING AND YET NOT ABUSING THEM.

Thus shall we be convinced of the power of our God, having this infallible SIGN of a true faith; and by blessed experience we shall be taught thus what was meant of old by the BRAZEN SERPENT, which Moses was commanded to LIFT UP IN THE WILDERNESS;* and also what was meant by THE SEED OF THE WOMAN BRUISING THE SERPENT'S HEAD,† and further, what our Lord meant when he said, to all his true disciples, "Beheld, I give
" unto you power to tread on serpents, and on
" scor-

* Numb. xxi. 8, 9. John iii. 14. † Gen. iii. 15.

“scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy,
“and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

For this purpose may we consider well, whether the SERPENT be TAKEN UP in us, and become a ROD, or whether we want this sign of a true faith! and may we all be led by such consideration to humble ourselves, with all our affections, principles, and powers, more deeply before our God, that so we may be made sensible, in a more lively and blessed manner, of the elevating and exalting power of his pure and holy love and truth in us!

* Luke x. 19.

SERMON

S E R M O N V.

ST. MARK xvi, 17, 18.

These Signs shall follow them that believe; in MY NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

WE have already considered the three first of these signs, viz. THE CASTING OUT DEVILS, THE SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES, AND THE TAKING UP SERPENTS, and shewn how these SIGNS in all ages, and with all people, have ever followed a true faith in the name of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ; we shall now proceed to consider, as was purposed, the FOURTH sign here pointed at by our blessed Lord, "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them," and shew how this SIGN is ever fulfilled in the true believer.

None however can understand what is meant by this.

this sign, unless it be first known what is meant here by ANY DEADLY THING, and BY DRINKING THEREOF. May I therefore bespeak your serious attention, whilst I endeavour to explain to you the real meaning of these expressions; and may I hope further that you will not fail to pray earnestly in your own minds for divine illumination herein, without which it will not be possible for you to comprehend the depth of that heavenly wisdom and instruction which the words before us contain!

It may seem, at first hearing, and to the merely natural mind it will continue to seem so, as if by the DEADLY THING, of which the Lord here speaks, nothing else was intended to be meant, but somewhat that brings death to the body, as all sorts of poisonous substances do; and that a true faith was to prevent the fatal effect of such NATURAL poisons.

But, beloved, permit me to intimate to you, that there are DEADLY THINGS of another sort, besides those which affect the BODY; there are SPIRITUAL as well as NATURAL poisons; and the SPIRITUAL life may be infected and destroyed by the one, as the NATURAL life may be infected and destroyed by the other.

For as by the word SERPENT, according to what was shewn in a late discourse, is meant not only a NATURAL serpent, in it's outward natural form
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here on earth, but also a SPIRITUAL serpent, that is, some spiritual evil principle in man corresponding thereto; so by the DEADLY THING, here spoken of by our Lord, is meant, not only NATURAL poison, or that which affects the BODY of man, but also SPIRITUAL poison, or that which affects the spirit of man.

But it will be asked, "What is to be understood by SPIRITUAL POISON? Every one understands well what NATURAL POISON is, by its terrible effects on the BODY; but has SPIRITUAL POISON the same sensible and terrible effects on the SOUL? Can there be any DEADLY THING which can infect and destroy the spiritual life of man, as we see natural poison infects and destroys his natural life? If there be such a DEADLY THING existing, tell us, what is it, or what are we to understand by it, that so we may be on our guard against it?"

I am well aware, that many questions of this kind will be suggested, concerning that spiritual DEADLY THING, or that SPIRITUAL POISON, of which we are speaking: they will however all of them find a full and satisfactory answer in our own minds, whensoever we do but rightly consider and apprehend the true nature of man's SPIRITUAL LIFE, what it is, and in what it consists.

Whilst we think of man only in respect to his BODILY LIFE, we shall not be able to form an
idea

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Whilst we think of man only in respect to his BODILY LIFE, we shall not be able to form an
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idea of any other sort of DEADLY THING, but what affects his BODILY LIFE; but if we would think of man in respect to his SPIRITUAL LIFE, that is, the eternal life of his spirit; if we would consider and comprehend aright what this SPIRITUAL LIFE is, and in what it consists, we should then see clearly, that it is subject to death also as well as the bodily life, and that whatever occasions it's death is a DEADLY THING, a SPIRITUAL POISON, so much more terrible than any NATURAL POISON. as the loss of spiritual life is more to be dreaded than the loss of bodily life.

We should then also, in some measure, be enabled to apprehend the particular nature, qualities, and properties of such SPIRITUAL POISON; we should perceive whence it originates, how it operates, and what is the proper and only ANTIDOTE against it; we should see how all NATURAL POISONS have their birth and origin in this SPIRITUAL POISON, and were intended to warn man of it's fatal effects and consequences.

We should, in short, then plainly see into the full sense and meaning of this sign of a true faith as declared by the Lord, "If they drink any "deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;" for we should see, how the impenitent, the unconverted, and unbelieving, are for ever drinking DEADLY THINGS, and are HURT thereby to the utter destruction of their immortal spirits; whereas the
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truly penitent, converted, and believing followers, of Jesus Christ, in and through the power of his mighty name and heavenly spirit guiding, governing and preserving them, though THEY DRINK OF DEADLY THINGS, yet their immortal or spiritual life suffers no injury thereby.

Much might here be said, if occasion required, and if time would permit, concerning the origin, nature, malignancy, and variety of spiritual DEADLY THINGS, OR POISONS; much more possibly than many would give credit to. At present, however, I shall beg leave to turn your attention to a remarkable expression here used by our Lord in describing the SIGN under consideration, which may serve to give us further light on this important subject.

It is observable that our Lord, in describing this SIGN, makes no mention of EATING any deadly thing, but only says, "If they drink any deadly thing." Now, if only mere NATURAL poison was here to be understood, there can no reason be assigned, why mention should not have been made of EATING, as well as of DRINKING, inasmuch as we all know that man's BODILY LIFE may be poisoned and destroyed, as well by what he EATS, as by what he DRINKS.

What considerate person then cannot here plainly see, that some lesson of deep instruction was intended by the Lord, and that this instruction

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must have relation to SPIRITUAL DEADLY THINGS, or spiritual poison?

I shall endeavour to unfold to such, as are desirous of apprehending and profiting by it, what this instruction is.

Every one, who is at all acquainted with the nature of spiritual life, must needs know, that spiritual life requires it's nourishment, that is, it's MEAT AND DRINK, as well as bodily life.

He may therefore further know, if he be so disposed, that spiritual life has it's HUNGER AND THIRST, and EATS AND DRINKS, as well as bodily life: and accordingly much mention is made in holy Scripture of such spiritual HUNGER AND THIRST, as well as of such spiritual EATING AND DRINKING.*

But though all this be known, or be easy to be known, yet few consider what constitutes the real difference between SPIRITUAL EATING and SPIRITUAL DRINKING, or in what they are distinguished; and yet this is of importance also to be known.

Now spiritual eating hath respect to the WILL PRINCIPLE in man; spiritual drinking hath respect to the principle of the UNDERSTANDING; we all know that man's mind consists of these two parts or principles; but then we do not enough
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* See more particularly Matt. v. 6. Luke vii. 21. and John vi. throughout.

consider what is the proper food and nourishment of each; how the one HUNGERS, the other THIRSTS, the one EATS, the other DRINKS, the one receives continually SPIRITUAL MEAT, whilst the other as constantly receives SPIRITUAL DRINK.

It will be sufficient however for our present purpose to know, that DRINKING hath respect to the principle of the understanding in man; and therefore, when our Lord said, "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them," he meant to allude to the DEADLY POISONOUS THINGS, which affect man's understanding.

Suffer me, by way of conclusion, to press upon you the important signification of this SIGN OF A TRUE FAITH, according to the sense of the expressions thus opened, and explained.

DEADLY THINGS, we have already shewn, are all such things as tend to destroy spiritual life in man: spiritual life is love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and towards one another, operating in all good thoughts, words, and works. To DRINK DEADLY THINGS then is to imbibe or receive those false principles and persuasions of evil in our understandings, which are opposite to and destructive of such spiritual life. These false principles and persuasions are many and various, being continually suggested to the mind, under an infinity of forms, by the devil, the world, and the flesh,

If man could see how he is ever beset by them, and what danger he is in from them, he would be all astonishment. For they encompass him about on every side; they are **THE BEES** of the Psalmist, of which he says, "They came about me like bees;"* they are also **THE LOCUSTS**, which St. John saw "ascending from the bottomless pit."† Solitude itself is no security against them, and yet in society and in conversation they generally abound most. Bad books are full of them, and in reading such books, we **DWELL AS AMONG SCORPIONS**, and yet there is no book so good, but, if we are not watchful, we may incur danger herein. Even the holy Scriptures themselves have been, and may be so perverted, as to become instruments of begetting the **DEADLY THINGS**, whilst the corrupt mind of man hath collected and doth still collect thence **FALSE DOCTRINES** and mistaken principles to his destruction. What shall I say more? The church of Christ itself is not free from the **FATAL POISON**, for even in the church, tenets and opinions are often taught and circulated, contrary to the truth, and highly prejudicial to the spiritual life of man.

Herein however is a remarkable difference, well to be attended to, in regard to the effect of these **DEADLY POISONOUS THINGS** on different persons. The impenitent and unconverted, who live merely

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* Psalm cxviii. 12.

† Rev ix. 2.

to themselves and the world, without any concern about their spiritual life, these all DRINK greedily of the DEADLY POISON; they receive it into the very essence of their life; it there diffuses it's fatal influences; it infects and destroys by degrees all the principles of the life of heaven, which is the true love of God and of their neighbour; it is to them what the Psalmist calls THE POISON OF ASPS;* they become dead thereby to all true life, and live merely a sensual, selfish and worldly life, which in the language of holy Scripture, is SPIRITUAL DEATH; and thus for want of a true faith in Jesus Christ, they are hurt by the DEADLY THING to the utter destruction of the soul and spirit.

But it is otherwise with those blessed ones, who by virtue of a true repentance and conversion to the God of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, have their minds ever open to his salutary influences, and experience the preserving and healing power of his spirit in their own hearts and lives. If these even DRINK THE DEADLY THING, IT DOTHT NOT HURT THEM; all false principles and persuasions which have admittance to their minds, all false doctrines, all false opinions, even though received for a time, yet lose their poisonous qualities, and are soon cast out again. Such true believers are they whom the prophet calls the SUCKING CHILD, WHICH SHOULD PLAY ON THE HOLE OF THE ASP;

* Psalm cxi. 3. Rom. iii. 13.

ASP; AND THE WEANED CHILD WHICH SHOULD PUT HIS HAND ON THE COCKATRICE DEN.* For having their souls ever open, by a true faith and good life, to the light of truth, which is the light of the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, and framing their lives accordingly, they HAVE THE SEAL OF GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS, and thus are preserved by virtue of that seal against all the power of the wicked one.

May we then labour, beloved, to experience the salutary influences of such a right evangelical faith! May we labour to possess this true sign of a true belief in the holy and high name of our God the Lord Jesus Christ! For this purpose may we be careful to come to this our God in the spirit of a true repentance, and sincere searching out and departing from all evil of iniquity, which is the love of ourselves, of this world and the flesh! Our Lord doth not say, IF THEY EAT any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, because TO EAT the deadly thing, is to LOVE and LIVE IN sin; and this must needs HURT every one, inasmuch as sin destroys all spiritual life, and none who lives in sin can possibly be a true believer. May we then in sincerity put away all sin, looking unto the manifested God the Redeemer Jesus Christ, and then we shall soon experience all the comforts of this sign of our faith, "If they drink any deadly thing," &c.

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* Isaiah xl. 8.

SERMON VI.

ST. MARK xvi. 17, 18.

These Signs shall follow them that believe; in my NAME shall they cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

IN the preceding discourses on these words, it has been already shewn what is to be understood by the four first of these signs, and how in all ages, and with all persons, they ever attend, and are expressive of, a true faith in the name of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If what was said concerning those four first signs, has been well considered and digested, the nature, meaning, and import of the fifth and last sign will thence plainly appear, and it will be clearly seen, how in the name of the same Lord and Saviour, the true believer will "lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Whilst

Whilst we look no deeper into the holy Word of God than the outward letter, and discern no higher life in man than the life of flesh and blood, we shall naturally be led to suppose, that by the sick here spoken of, our blessed Lord meant only the sick in body, and that by laying hands on them and their consequent recovery, he intended only to point out the efficacy of his power in curing bodily disorders.

But if our eyes were opened to see through the veil of the LETTER into the SPIRIT of the holy Scriptures; if at the same time we were enabled to discern in ourselves a better and higher principle of life than that of mere flesh and blood, even the immortal and most precious life of our souls or spirits; we should be capable of apprehending, that when our Lord said of true believers, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," he designed to point out to us a power which should serve nobler ends, and accomplish higher purposes, than that of curing the infirmities of mere bodily life only.

We should then see clearly what is here meant BY LAYING ON OF HANDS; what BY THE SICK; and what BY THEIR RECOVERY; and this sight would be exceedingly blessed to us, and would tend to quicken and strengthen our faith in that holy God and Saviour, who thus continually works mighty signs and wonders in all those that truly

truly believe in his great and holy name. May all our eyes then be now opened to see into the true spirit and meaning of God's holy Word! May they be further opened to discern in ourselves that hidden but invaluable life of our spirits, which is infinitely above the perishable life of flesh and blood! May we thus be prepared to consider and apprehend the true sense of this last sign of a real Gospel faith, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

And first, May we rightly consider and apprehend what is here meant by LAYING ON OF HANDS!—This has been a SIGN in all ages to denote a communication of virtue and power; thus our Lord and his Apostles used this sign continually both in blessing the bodies and the souls of men; they LAID THEIR HANDS ON some, and they were healed of bodily diseases; they LAID THEIR HANDS ON others, and THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST, and were cured of spiritual diseases.

By the sign then of LAYING ON OF HANDS, as applied to a true faith, is meant, a communication thereby of divine virtue and power from the great OMNIPOTENT, the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is the blessed privilege of the true believer, that he enjoys continually such a communication: his faith is a divine principle in him derived from the great redeeming God, and ascend-
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ing again up to that God, and operating in conformity to his laws: it keeps open therefore the door of his heart ever towards God: all holy and heavenly influences enter daily and hourly at that door; and in this sacred communion he discovers the true source of all human power and virtue: a power of his own, a virtue self-derived, he here discovers are things of no value in the sight of God: his faith therefore operates in the name of Jesus Christ alone, and he refers all power, all virtue, and all excellency to this their only true and proper source: thus does the true believer fulfil this sign of LAYING ON OF HANDS in the name of Jesus Christ.

But for what end is this divine power received, or what is this LAYING ON OF HANDS to effect? We are presently informed, "They shall lay hands on the sick." By the sick, it is very plain, are here meant, not only the bodily, but the SPIRITUALLY SICK, or such as are diseased in their souls through sin: our blessed Lord and his Apostles did indeed cure the BODILY diseases of men, by the LAYING ON OF HANDS; but then it is well to be observed, that the cure of bodily diseases was only intended as an EXTERNAL sign and proof of that internal power and virtue, opened in and through the great Redeemer, which was to cure the diseases of the soul; and every enlightened eye will regard it according to this it's real and heavenly intention.

But

But it may be asked, "What are the diseases of
" of the soul, and who are the spiritually sick?—
Alas! can we any of us be ignorant of this?
Have we never examined our own hearts and
lives? Did we never discover by such examina-
tion the symptoms of spiritual disease and malady?
Are all the powers and principles of life, in all
their several degrees, sound, perfect, and vigorous
in us? Do we love the great and holy God as
freely, as purely, and as effectually, as we ought
to love him? Do we love our neighbours as our-
selves, and shew forth this our love in deed and
operation? Do we find no obstructions to this
love and it's fruits? No selfish affections, no
worldly interests, no carnal concupiscencies, that
thwart, pervert, or defile the love of heaven?
Surely none can have examined himself sincerely
herein, but he must have found that all is not
right with him; he must therefore have disco-
vered the root of DISORDER; he must be forced
to see and confess, that both himself and all man-
kind are by nature spiritually sick, and can only
be restored to health by the LAYING ON OF THE
HANDS of a true and effectual faith in Jesus Christ.

Behold here then a further sign and character
of a true believer in the name of the Lord God
and Saviour Jesus Christ! He hath not only com-
munication with heaven, that is, with the God of
heaven, by virtue of his heavenly faith in Jesus
Christ,

Christ, but he also applies this communication, and the powers and influences thereby bestowed, to the state of his own soul; he rectifies by it all the principles of his life in their several degrees; he examines into the nature and kind of all his disorders, that is, his departures from heavenly order and uprightness; he applies medicines to each, according to their several necessities; he strengthens what is weak; he purges and separates what is impure; he cuts off what is unsound; in short, bringing his whole life into conformity to the laws of Jesus Christ, which are the laws of heaven and heavenly order, he draws down the healing virtues thereof into his own soul, and his own life, and thus gives a sure infallible proof and sign of his faith by "laying hands on the sick."

But this is not all—Did the believer's faith do no more than open communication with heaven, and draw down the healing virtues thereof, and apply them to his spiritual disorders, without effecting a cure, it would in this case be a fruitless and imperfect faith; leaving him as it found him, a poor, infirm, diseased, and sickly being. Too many alas! amongst those who call themselves Christians are in this state; they look up to heaven at times for divine virtue and power; they receive medicines for the removal of all their disorders; but then they do not so use and apply those medicines as to render them effectual; they
mix

mix other things with them, which counter-act and oppose their healing operation; just as in the case of bodily disorders, we see people sometimes take physic, who disappoint all the good effects thereof by an indiscreet mixture of other and contrary things with it, or by irregularity of life.

Not so the true and sincere believer in Jesus Christ: in him is fulfilled this sign in all it's fullness, "He shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." He does not rest satisfied with opening the communication between God and his own soul, and applying the healing medicines of the Gospel to cure his disorders, but he is careful that those medicines may have their full effect; that they may operate to his ENTIRE RECOVERY of the health, strength, and perfection of a divine life; that his love to God and his neighbour may be sound, constant, regular, chearful, active, fruitful, and operative; that all hindrances may be removed, all sources of malady and disease extirpated, which tend to weaken, to disorder, or to pervert the influences of heaven and heavenly life: in applying therefore these medicines, he takes good heed not to mix therewith any thing which may disturb their salutary operations; he observes such rules of spiritual sobriety, order, cleanliness, separation, and regularity, as may insure success to his applications; he knows that the healing grace and mercy of Jesus Christ has such a

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power

power and virtue in it, that nothing can prevent it's efficacy, if it be suffered to operate freely and fully; but he knows also, that notwithstanding such power and virtue of divine grace, it's efficacy may be retarded, if not totally perverted and prevented, by the indiscretion of man; these considerations, at the same time that they teach him to place the fullest confidence in God, teach him also to be very watchful and circumspect over himself; and thus, he applies the Gospel remedies, and he applies them successfully; he "lays hands
"on the sick and they recover."

Oh blessed privilege of a true faith, which is thus operative to the removal of all disease and disorder of soul, and to it's full recovery and establishment in a divine and heavenly life! Oh happy believer, who is thus enabled to hold intercourse with heaven, to draw down thence heavenly virtue and power, and to recover thereby the sound and perfect image, life and likeness of heaven, to the utter extirpation of the disordered image, life, and likeness of vanity and ungodliness! Oh most holy and all-powerful virtue, flowing continually from the heavenly humanity of the glorified Redeemer the blessed Jesus, which is thus given forth for THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS, and the restoration of health, and strength, and peace unto the people!—Grant, O merciful God, to us thy sinful children the true wisdom, to
apply

apply to Thee sincerely, constantly, and effectually for this thine healing virtue. May our hearts be ever open to the reception thereof! May we be enlightened to see and apprehend our great need of it, from a conviction of our manifold disorders! And may this conviction lead us so to use the blessed medicine, that we may never by our irregularities pervert it's efficacy, but by the order and sobriety of our lives may so cherish and assist it's influence, that it may work to our perfect and final recovery from all sickness, to the health, strength and comfort of an heavenly life! AMEN.

THE
BOOK OF LIFE;

OR, THE

Nature and Circumstances of a future Judgment,

OPENED AND EXPLAINED.

IN TWO SERMONS.

SERMON VII.

REV. XX. 15.

And whosoever was not found written in THE BOOK OF LIFE
was cast into the lake of fire.

IT must needs be matter of concern to every
thinking person, to consider whether his name
be written in THE BOOK OF LIFE.

For there is certainly such a BOOK kept before
God; it must some time or other be opened; every
on

one must be judged out of it ; and according as he is found therein, so must his eternal state be either of blifs or misery.

It is greatly to be feared however that few are rightly impressed with a sense of these awful truths on their minds, few consider the nature and reality of that BOOK out of which they are to be judged ; fewer still are truly concerned to live in such a temper, and spirit, and way of life, that when that BOOK is opened, it may be to their joy and comfort.

Suffer me then, as one that earnestly wisheth all YOUR names may be found written in THE BOOK OF LIFE ; as one that is to give account hereafter whether he hath duly warned you concerning THAT BOOK, and rightly instructed you to prepare for the opening of it ; suffer me, I say, to put you in remembrance of THAT BOOK ; to call you for a moment from your worldly business, your worldly cares, your lesser interests and satisfactions, to consider and lay to heart THE ONE THING NEEDFUL ; to consider, I say, the BOOK OF LIFE, and whether your names be written therein.

We read in the verses preceding my text, that St. John “saw the dead both small and great stand
“before God, and the books were opened, and
“another book was opened which is the book of
“life, and the dead were judged out of those
“things,

" things which were written in the books, according to their works."

You have probably heretofore been used to think that the books here mentioned are real books, such as men use to write in, wherein the Almighty writeth the names and actions of all mankind, and that all are to be judged according to what is written in those books.

But, beloved, permit me to intimate to you, that God has no occasion for such books as these; the books here spoken of are of another sort than the books of men; they are those books of which the prophet speaketh when he saith, " The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the TABLE (that is the book) of their heart," Jer. xvii. 1. and St. Paul speaketh of the same books when he telleth the Corinthians, " Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in FLESHLY TABLES OF THE HEART," 2 Cor. iii. 3. In short, the book, by and out of which every man is to be judged hereafter, is the book of his own heart and life, of his spirit, or of his inner man, because in this book are written all those things that are to save or condemn him in another life.

Possibly

Possibly you have never BEFORE considered the subject in this light; let me then press you NOW to consider it earnestly, because of it's infinite importance to your everlasting interests.

Know then, that in the living book of your hearts, that is, of your spirits or inner man, is ever written, in the most plain and legible characters, whatsoever you will, think, or do, during your continuance in the body, so that when you put off your bodies, it will then plainly appear before God and angels what has engaged your chief desire and attention, during your abode in this world.

As for example; if your present lives be fashioned only according to the spirit of this world and the flesh; if you are regarding only the lower cares and pleasures of an earthly existence, if you are living without God and his holy law and spirit to be your guides and comforters; if your hearts are not renewing by repentance and regeneration, according to the heavenly spirit of love towards the Lord and towards your neighbour, you are then writing in the book of your hearts a sentence of condemnation and misery hereafter against yourselves; all your earthly, carnal and vain desires and imaginations will be impressed in deep and living characters upon your souls or spirits; so that when you come into another world, where these BOOKS are to be opened, it will then plainly appear

appear what you have written therein, and you must take your everlasting lot according to that which is written in your BOOKS.

But on the contrary, if it has been here your labour and desire to come out of all the sin and misery of a worldly and carnal nature; if you have studied by repentance to enjoy communion with God, and to love him above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves; if you have thus written in your hearts the law of the spirit of life, and have suffered that law to influence all your thoughts and actions; then let it rejoice you to know, that YOUR NAMES are certainly written in the BOOK OF LIFE; all your good desires, all your good thoughts, all your good works, are inscribed deep on your inner man by the hand-writing of God himself; and when you come into another world, he will then see the WRITING, and will acknowledge you as his own.

Whensoever then from henceforth you think of that book out of which you are to be judged in the other life, then think of this book of your own hearts, or spirits, or inner man: remember that all things whatsoever you will, or think, or do, are there written and recorded in the most indelible characters. Remember also that these books must be opened; all spirits must sooner or later appear naked before the Lord of heaven and earth; their forms, and qualities, and characters; their desires, thoughts,

thoughts, and works are all known unto him, and must soon be made to appear open to the view of his angels. We may deceive men by our outward countenances, but we cannot deceive God, who seeth and readeth daily what is written and writing within us.

And do you wish to have your names written in that other book, THE BOOK OF LIFE? Oh, then consider well what this book of life is, that it is THE WORD OF GOD, and that your names can never be found in it, but so far as you have the spirit of that Word written in your hearts, and operative in your lives. See well then that this Word of the spirit of life, that is, the law of heavenly love, and charity, and truth, from the Lord Jesus Christ, may be deeply written in your hearts and on your actions: for this purpose, let me earnestly admonish you, be careful to blot out by true repentance all that WRITING of the ungodly, carnal, vain, uncharitable spirit of this world and the flesh, which is written with a PEN OF IRON, AND WITH THE POINT OF A DIAMOND, in the hearts of the children of this world; for their image and superscription is the spirit of selfish pride, worldly covetousness, wrath, hatred, ambition, and vain glory, which cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the image and superscription of the children of God is the meek and lowly and merciful and heavenly-minded spirit of Jesus.

Jesus Christ. Write then on your hearts this blessed image and superscription; copy out the life, and spirit, and tempers of the blessed Jesus into your lives, as the writing of eternal life! for all things are death, and consigned to death, which have not this living stamp engraven upon them; but on whatever heart this law, this name, these heavenly characters of the living Lord the God and Saviour Jesus Christ are written, and engraven deep, there is written also eternal life, and heaven, and blessedness, and the favour of God and everlasting salvation.

May we all, beloved, keep in continual remembrance this book of life! May we be often reading therein! May we be ever blotting out by unfeigned repentance the condemning deadly characters of sin, of self, and of this world! and may we never suffer our eyes to sleep or our eye-lids to slumber, till by a true conversion to Jesus Christ, and a pure obedience to his commandments, we have our names written in his book of life, that is, have his word of life written in us, according to those words in the prophet, "I will put my law" "in their inward parts, and write it in their" "hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be" "my people." Jer. xxxi. 33.

S E R M O N VIII.

Rev. xx. 12.

And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their WORKS.

THE nature and circumstances of a future judgment; what enquiries will be made, and how it will fare with us at that day, when we are all to stand before the tribunal of Christ; are points which above all others deserve the serious consideration of every reasonable being.

The holy Scriptures of truth have given us the fullest information touching these points of so great importance to us. No one who readeth them attentively, but may discover in every page what is to be the rule of enquiry at the great day of account. The laws of salvation, and the sentences of condemnation, are there marked in such clear and striking

striking characters, that he who mistaketh or misapprehendeth them, must be blinded by the prejudices of a corrupt will, or a perverse understanding.

There is not, however, throughout all the scriptures, a shorter or a plainer declaration of the nature and circumstances of a future judgment, than what is contained in the words of my text. May I therefore bespeak your particular attention to them; may I caution and counsel you to treasure them up in your hearts: to take heed that you may never forget them, that you may never pervert them, that you may never even misapprehend or mistake them; but that walking continually by the bright and heavenly light thereof in your own minds, you may be prepared thereby to meet your God!

“The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the BOOKS, according to their WORKS.”

I have already shewn you, in a former discourse, what is meant by the books here spoken of, and what by the things written therein. The books are our own hearts; the things written therein are our affections, our desires, our thoughts, our imaginations, whether they have been carnal or spiritual, whether they have been directed towards God in the ways of repentance and regeneration, or towards the world and the flesh only, in the ways of impenitence and unbelief; all these things are

are ever writing, and remain written in our inner man, and according to what is written, so are we to be judged hereafter.

But the sentence of judgment hereafter, we are informed, will extend to a further circumstance. We are not only to be judged out of those things written in the BOOKS, but also ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, that is, not only according to the internal state of our hearts, but according to our external actions, or the external state of our lives.

What an awful and edifying consideration, beloved, is here presented to your minds!

Your state in the eternal world, when you put off your present mortal bodies, will depend principally, and in the first place, on the interior state of your hearts, and on what is then found written in those everlasting books; then it will be seen evidently what you have been chiefly seeking, what you have been chiefly desiring, what has most engaged your thoughts and attention; which you have most loved, God or this world, your neighbour or yourselves; what law you have most obeyed, the law of death or of life, the law which came down out of heaven, or the earthly law of sin and self only. All these things will be then, I say, seen deeply engraven on your hearts, and you must be judged out of those things thus written in your BOOKS.

But the examination will not stop here. You

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must

must further be judged, it is written, ACCORDING TO YOUR works, that is, according to what you have been and what you have done in the outward man, or in your words and actions.

Oh that I could rightly enforce this weighty consideration, beloved, on all your minds! that I could convince you of the certainty of this judgment, and shew you thence the necessity of attending carefully to your daily words and works, that so they may ever be framed according to the spirit of heavenly love and charity within, and may thus secure you a happy place in the mansions of the blessed.

It is the great end of religion, of the law and of the Gospel, thus to purify the heart and life of man, that he may be ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. Jesus Christ purgeth the believing soul from sin, and reneweth it in the heavenly image of his own holy love and charity, that it may go forth in that blessed spirit, and bring forth much fruit of good use and service amongst men. Until our religion be thus operative, it is a dead unprofitable thing both to ourselves and others; it is a mere spiritual selfishness in which the soul liveth only to itself, loving itself better than God and it's neighbour. Do not, however, mistake me here. as if all works are good works: no; there are HYPOCRITICAL works, such as have a fair appearance in the sight of men, but proceeding from an un sanctified spirit,
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are not pure before God. There are MERITORIOUS works, such as done to establish our own merit and righteousness, and therefore cannot please God, because they rob him of his belongings. There are also LEGAL OR FORMAL works, such as consist in a mere pharisaical observance of outward rites and ceremonies of the church, but having nothing in them of heavenly love and charity, are unprofitable to salvation.

To make works good then and profitable to salvation, they must be the genuine fruits of a regenerate spirit, purified according to the love of God, and of it's neighbour.

There has unhappily prevailed amongst some, a mistaken and destructive doctrine, that man may be saved and do well at the last day, if he professes only a nominal faith in Christ, and trusteth to his merits, without any regard to his own doings, that is, to his own life and works.

But beloved, need I be at any pains to point out to you the unreasonableness, the falseness, and the danger of this doctrine? or doth it not appear plain to yourselves, whilst you read the words in my text, that the dead are to be judged, "according to their works;" and whilst you hear Christ say "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, for the tree is known by it's fruit?" Matt. vii. 19. xii. 33. Again, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord,

“and do not the thing which I say?” Luke vi. 46. Again, “If ye know things, happy are ye if ye do them.” John xiii. 17.

Doth it not, I say, hence appear plain unto you all, that you are to be saved or condemned hereafter according to your works?

Take good heed to yourselves then how you make any mistake, or impose upon yourselves, or suffer others to impose upon you in this matter. You call yourselves the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. You profess to believe in his holy name, and in his Word. You are persuaded that you are to be judged according thereto, when you come to appear before him hereafter.

Let me advise you then, with all possible earnestness and affection, if ye wish to appear before him to your comfort, to ask yourselves now in his presence these few questions.

Do your works bear testimony to this your belief and profession? Doth it appear, by your daily actions that you are inwardly renewed in the spirit of the life and love and charity of Jesus Christ? What fruit have ye to shew that ye are branches of the true vine? “Every branch in me (saith the Lord) that beareth not good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire, but every branch that beareth fruit, my father purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit?” John xv. 2. Are your works, your words and actions then proofs of
“your

your being branches that bear good fruit? Is your heavenly father herein glorified? Is your earthly neighbour, your brother in Christ Jesus, herein profited? Do you let your light so shine before men that they may see your GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER, WHICH IS IN HEAVEN? Are ye faithful, sincere, and diligent in discharging the duties of your several callings? Doth your love to Christ appear by loving your brethren, bearing their burdens, relieving their distresses, according to your ability? and do ye take no merit, no glory to yourselves in so doing, but do all to the glory of God, accounting him, and not yourselves, the worker of all that is good?

These questions, if you would sincerely ask yourselves in God's presence, you might then know in what state of preparation you are for that day, when the books are to be opened, and you are to be judged out of those things written in the books, according to your works.

To conclude.—In the book of Daniel we read a remarkable but instructive history of the wicked King Belshazzar, how at an hour of dreadful carelessness and security, when his soul had forgotten the God of heaven and the world to come, and was open only to the fleeting delights of sin and the flesh; how, I say, at such an hour, when he, alas! thought himself most happy and unseen of God, he saw come forth, the FINGERS OF A MAN'S
HAND,

HAND, and write over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of his palace, to his unutterable confusion, these awful words, "MENE, "MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN, Dan. v, 25. that is, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; "thou art weighed in the balances, and art found "wanting; thy kingdom is divided."

What compassionate heart doth not pity the case of this unhappy but wicked king? Who but must tremble when he thinketh of such an HAND WRITING ON THE WALL?

We do well to pity, and to tremble—only let us pity, let us tremble for ourselves, as well as for Belsazzar of old; for let us remember that the same hand-writing is against us, the same things are written in our houses, the same FINGERS OF A MAN'S HAND will appear there, so long as we continue to live like Belsazzar, in our natural careless and unregenerate state, forgetful of the God of Heaven, and of his law in our hearts and lives, and having our desires only open to, and reaching after the things of this world and the flesh.

Would you then avoid the fate of this unhappy king? Write then in your houses, that is in your hearts, by a true repentance and conversion, the Name, and Love, and Law, and Word of the Lord God the Saviour Jesus Christ, the everlasting Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator of all flesh. Let this holy name and love, this holy law
and

and word descend from your hearts into your lives and actions, so that both within and without you may be sanctified thereby: "Be ye doers" thereof and not hearers only:" take heed to your outward works, that they may bear a faithful testimony to what is written in your books: thus will you never see the FINGERS OF A MAN'S HAND, writing against you according to the tenor of these words, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, but you will see the fingers of God writing on your hearts, in blessed characters, never to be effaced, according to the tenor of these words, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: And I WILL WRITE UPON HIM THE NAME OF MY God, and the name of the city of my God, the NEW JERUSALEM, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my NEW NAME." Rev. iii. 12.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S
PROGRESS TO PERFECTION;

WITH PARTICULAR APPLICATION TO
THE TWO SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM AND
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN THREE SERMONS.

SERMON IX.

HEB. vi. Part of 1st Verse.

Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of CHRIST, let us
go on to Perfection.

THE christian life hath ever been considered
as a progressive state, wherein the obedient
soul advanceth from one degree of grace to another,
still drawing nearer and nearer towards perfec-
tion. This is what the Apostle remindeth his
Hebrew

Hebrew converts of in the words of my text; wherein he directeth them to leave THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, that is, not to rest contented with the first notions or knowledges they had received, or with the first steps they had taken towards the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but TO GO ON TO PERFECTION, that is, to labour to become perfect in the grace and love of the Lord; to take possession of the kingdom for which they had set out; or as St. Paul expresseth it, "forgetting those things that are behind, to reach forth unto those things that are before; to press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;"* or as it is expressed by St. Peter, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.†"

The words of my text thus explained, I propose to shew from them

1st. The danger of resting satisfied with first attainments in religion, or the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

adly. The nature, reasonableness, and blessedness

* Philipiana iii, 13, 14.

† 1 Pet, 1, 5, 6, 7.

ness of leaving first principles, and going on to perfection.

And 1st. There are but too many, it is to be feared, who having once set their faces towards Jesus Christ, and done some slight work of repentance, and experienced some few convictions of the guilt of sin, and the vanities of temporal things, and the corruptions of their own natures, and the necessity of their regeneration, do suddenly stop short at this entrance upon a divine life, this beginning of their christian course, this first dawn or day-break of the light of the sun of righteousness, and taking up their rest therein, think it sufficient to have gone thus far, without ever attempting or even intending to go further.

But alas! who cannot see the great danger and deceitfulness of such conduct? for what can it profit to lay the foundation of a house, unless we proceed to raise the superstructure? What can it profit to set forward on a journey, unless we continue our travels till we arrive at the place for which we set out?

The Christian life is frequently called in holy Scripture a new birth, by reason that the true Christian is really and truly born anew; he is made a new man; he entereth upon a new life; he gaineth new tempers, habits, and ways of thinking and acting; he becometh an inheritor of a new world; "old things are passed away, and all
" things

“things in him become new;” how plain then is it to see, that supposing a man to stop at the beginning of this new birth; supposing him to cease growing in this new life, before he is come to full age and maturity, he must be a sort of monstrous or imperfect production, and by no means a complete and perfect Christian.

Our blessed Lord speaketh of a person who began to build a tower, but was not able to finish it: and saith of such an one, that “all who go by” mock him, saying, this man began to build, but “was not able to finish.”*

In this character our Lord alludeth to the folly and danger of resting in first attainments in religion and godliness, that is, of fancying that our work is done when perhaps we have but just begun it; when we have possibly experienced in ourselves some slight motions towards a divine life; some faint rays of heavenly light beginning to dawn upon us; some compunction of heart for living so long separate from God in sin and vanity. These things indeed are the beginnings of holiness and heaven in the soul; they are, if I may so express it, the foundations of the tower or holy temple within us, for our God to dwell in; but how plain is it to see, that if we rest satisfied with these beginnings, with this laying only the foundations

* Luke xiv. 28, 29, 30.

of God's house, we do much impose both upon God, and upon ourselves!

We read in holy scripture of some of the children of Israel, who in their journey from Egypt towards the land of Canaan, began to repent of their purpose, and to wish themselves back again amongst the FLESH-POTS OF EGYPT;* they had set forward indeed in the good way; nay, they had made large advances therein; but for want of a sincere resolution to press forward to the end of their journey, they grew faint-hearted, and wished to turn back again.

Now what is here retorded of the children of Israel, will be found true of all those Christians, who in their journey from spiritual Egypt to the heavenly Canaan, are contented merely to have set out, without a sincere resolution also to press forwards to the end of their journey; they may perhaps leave the land of Egypt, that is, they may turn their backs upon some few sins; and they may possibly travel also some few days journey into the wilderness; that is, they may experience some small trials and temptations of the Christian life; but if their purpose be not stedfast to proceed further; if they do not look for a full reward, and labour to enter into entire possession of the heavenly Canaan, which is the true love, righteousness and rest of God perfected in the regenerate soul,

* Exod. xvi. 2, 3. Numb. xi. 4, 5.

soul, they will then do as the faint-hearted children of Israel formerly did, they will repent that they ever set out; they will wish themselves back again in their old land of carnal delights; nay, it is more than probable, they will return to that land; and what is still worse, they will find there SEVEN OTHER SPIRITS MORE WICKED than that which had been cast-out, according to our Lord's parable concerning the unclean spirit; * "and thus their last state will be worse than their first.

Having thus then pointed out the danger of resting in first attainments in religion, I shall now proceed to shew the nature, reasonableness and blessedness of following the Apostle's advice, and GOING ON TO PERFECTION.

Perfection and the progress thereto is thus described in various passages of the holy Scriptures, "Walk before me, saith God to Abraham, and be thou perfect;" || "Mark the perfect man (saith the psalmist) his end is peace;" † "The path of the just (saith the wise man) shineth more and more unto perfect day;" ‡ "Be ye perfect (saith the Lord) even as your heavenly father is perfect;" § again, "if thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come
I follow

* Matt. xii. 43, 44, 45. || Gen. xviii. 1. † Psalm xxxvii. 37.

‡ Prov. iv. 18. § Matt. v. 48.

“ follow me;”† again, “ every one that is perfect shall be as his master;”* to which may be added the testimony of St. Paul, “ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;† and in another place, “ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work;‡ and also the testimony of St. James, “ Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing;”|| and lastly, the testimony of St. John, “ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment;”§ and again, “ Perfect love casteth out fear; he that feareth is not made perfect in love.”¶

From these, and many other similar passages of holy Scripture, we are plainly taught, in what PERFECTION consists, and what is the nature and manner of our PROGRESS towards it. It consists in conformity to God, and conjunction with him; in being renewed in his image and likeness; in being purified through his love; in being enlightened through his wisdom; in becoming hereby PERFECT MEN; that is, being fashioned through regeneration

† Matt. xix. 21. * Luke vi. 40. † Ephes. iv. 13. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 17.

|| James i. 4. § 1 John iv. 17. ¶ 1 John iv. 18.

tion after a perfect or heavenly form, which is the form of the divine order, harmony, purity and peace, according to the heavenly unchangeable law and spirit of justice and judgment, righteousness and truth, from Jesus Christ in the inner man, manifesting itself in all good thoughts, words, and works in the outward man: and it consists further in a consequent deliverance from the forms and powers of sin and ungodliness; from the misery of our own tormenting passions; from the impurities, perplexities, fears, and uneasinesses, which ever attend the unpurified unregenerate soul that is not at peace with God.

And as this appears from the above scriptures, to be the true nature of Christian perfection, so our progress towards it consists, according to the same scriptures, in walking in the ways of God's commandments; in setting the Lord Jesus Christ continually before our eyes, as our manifested God, and Redeemer; in following his example; IN FORSAKING ALL, that is, all our OWN will, our OWN wisdom, our worldly affections and attachments, our carnal concupiscencies, which are opposite to the spirit, and life, the tempers and dispositions of Jesus Christ, that so all the holy influences of his word and kingdom may have full admission to our humble hearts, and become exalted and operative therein, until we are thoroughly changed and renewed thereby, and made

the children of his purity, power, and peace, meet to stand in his presence and glory, and the bliss of his kingdom, which is the great end of our creation, and the very sum and substance of all the counsels of our God towards us.

This it is to GO ON TO PERFECTION, which is a point, though never to be fully attained, yet to which we may be approaching nearer and nearer to all eternity; inasmuch as it is highly credible, both from the testimony of reason and scripture, that the good soul's purification and regeneration, through divine influence, will continue advancing from one degree of glory to another through the boundless ages of eternal duration.

The reasonableness and blessedness then of thus going on towards perfection in godliness, or a divine life, must surely be obvious to every considerate and thinking person; for if the soul be thus capable of increasing in knowledge and goodness, in wisdom and love from the Lord Jesus Christ; if it may thus be daily making further advances towards the true perfection of its nature and happiness; if it may daily be rendered more pure from the defilements of sin, and self, and thereby separated further from the kingdom and the powers of darkness, and admitted to a closer and more intimate union with the angels of light; if I say this be really the case with us all, then what can be

more

more reasonable, what more blessed, than to press forwards towards this state of perfection?

Besides—it is the nature of every way of life, that the more it is practised, so much the more familiar it groweth, and consequently is more beloved by the person who practiseth it.

This is singularly the case with respect to a divine life, consisting in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. The more this life is practised by and becometh familiar to the soul, so much the more pleasant and satisfactory it is rendered at the same time. He who stoppeth short indeed, and standeth still, without looking for the PERFECT-ION of this life, experienceth little of it's comforts; but he who becometh truly obedient to the divine grace and holy love; he who will make no reserves with his heavenly Lord and Redeemer, but like good Caleb* of old, WHOLLY AND FULLY FOLLOWETH THE LORD HIS GOD, cleaving stedfastly and entirely to him, and being resolutely determined to become his both in body and soul, and to be moulded altogether after his image of perfect love and wisdom, humility and charity; such an one entereth indeed upon the full consolations of the divine life; the further he advanceth therein, the more he is astonished at it's encreasing glory and blessedness; every fresh step

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* Numb. xiv. 30. Joshua xiv. 9.

he taketh openeth to his view a prospect of brighter scenes than the last; "he singeth every day a new song unto the Lord;" not that he meeteth with no troubles and trials in his way, for he experienceth many; but then he findeth that they all work for his greater purification and bliss, by making him more humble in himself, and more faithful to his God; he is afraid therefore of nothing so much as of standing still in the way to that glorious kingdom before him, where he perceiveth still new glories, new treasures, new delights offered to his acceptance; he walketh on therefore with a calm and steady pace, neither deterred by troubles, nor dispirited by fears, nor turned back by delusive temptations, nor discouraged even by his own frailties and imperfections, knowing of a certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ is before him, and with him, and that the more stedfastly he endureth to the end, the more he shall assuredly see of the Lord's great deliverances, till he finally join in that blessed song, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."*

To conclude—If we are not trifling, beloved, with

* Rev. xli. 16.

with God and our everlasting peace, we shall certainly take into consideration these great and weighty truths; we shall bethink ourselves what a dangerous folly it is to stop short in the way of eternal life, and content ourselves with taking up FALSE RESTING-PLACES therein; we shall reflect how much mischief we do thereby unto our souls, and how much despite unto the grace of our God; we shall represent to ourselves what a poor and contemptible kind of virtue and religion that man's is, who doth not wish and labour to become daily more virtuous and religious, and what unworthy notions he must entertain of communion with God and heaven, who doth not daily strive to be further advanced therein.

And on the other hand we shall not fail to set before our eyes the great reasonableness and blessedness of going on to perfection in the ways of God, and the purification of our souls from all evil of worldly, fleshly and selfish love; we shall consider how we are called by the Lord Jesus Christ to live united with him; to open our hearts to his holy influences; to become daily purer temples of his holy spirit; to advance daily to a nearer and closer communion with him and his angels in love and righteousness, and good works.

And if we rightly and in true earnest take these things into consideration, they will then assuredly have their due effect upon our lives and conduct.

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We shall then no longer deceive ourselves, or suffer ourselves to be deceived with a false and foolish piety, with a kind of wavering between God and his enemies, between heaven and hell, between salvation and destruction, HALTING THUS BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS,* in the UNSTABLENESS of the DOUBLE-MINDED, but turning our hearts and faces wholly towards the Lord Jesus Christ, in true denial of ourselves and all ungodliness, we shall not rest till every power of the enemy be subdued; till every ungodly form of iniquity be destroyed; till the contrary powers and forms of righteousness and truth be established; till the divine image be fully and perfectly restored; and through the opening and operation of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in our hearts and lives, we can truly say, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.

* 1 Kings xviii, 21. James i. 8.

S E R M O N X.

H E B. vi. Part of 1st Verse.

Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of CHRIST, let us
go on to Perfection.

WHAT hath been said in the foregoing discourse concerning the great danger of resting in the PRINCIPLES or beginnings of holiness, together with the great reasonableness and blessedness of going on to PERFECTION in a divine life, may be very justly and profitably applied to the two sacraments of the Lord's supper. For it is possible we may rest in the PRINCIPLES of those holy ordinances; it is possible also we may go on to PERFECTION therein; the first state is full of folly and danger; the second is full of reasonableness and blessedness, as I shall now proceed to shew in relation to each of these sacraments.

And 1st. In relation to the sacrament of baptism.

There are but too many, it is to be feared, who,
resting

resting in the PRINCIPLES of baptism, that is, in the outward FORM or SIGN thereof, and never looking further towards it's PERFECTION, that is, to the true inward and spiritual GRACE signified thereby, fancy themselves pure and regenerate Christians, merely because they have been partakers of such an outward ordinance, when they were in their infant state.

But, beloved, need I be at any pains to expose before you the danger and the folly of such a conceit? For what can the mere OUTWARD washing of water do towards the INWARD purification of the soul from sin, or towards it's regeneration in a divine and holy life? Sin is an internal defilement of the soul, arising from unclean affections and thoughts, which in man's natural state are opposite to God and his righteousness; how then can mere outward water wash away such inward uncleanness, and make the soul pure and holy in God's sight. It may indeed be a TYPE, or REPRESENTATIVE, of such inward washing and purification, and so indeed it is, and according to that sense it was practised and instituted by our blessed Lord; but yet who doth not see that to rest therein, and to suppose THAT to be the substance and reality, which is nothing but the figure and the type, is deceiving ourselves in the most gross and dangerous manner?

By the outward form of baptism we are introduced

duced into the Christian church; we receive the name of Christians; we are marked with the mark of Jesus Christ; thus we are put in a state of attaining to purification from evil, and regeneration of life; and thus far all is done according to divine order and wisdom, because both order and wisdom require such external signs and ceremonies, as tokens of, and as introductions to the internal graces and virtues which they represent; but then to suppose it enough to be introduced into the Christian profession, to receive the name of Christians only, to put on a mere outward badge of our belonging to Christ, without advancing any further;—what eyes cannot see that in such case we frustrate the great end and intention of the divine grace and ordinance?

For what can it avail us with respect to salvation to have been introduced only into the Christian church, if we do not afterwards walk and live according to that profession we have made, and that society to which we belong? What can it avail us again to have the name of Christians, if we do not go on to attain what is signified by the name, viz. the spirit and inward qualities of Christians? Or lastly, what can it avail to put on a mere outward mark of our belonging to Christ, if we do not put on his inward tempers also; if we do not form our hearts, our understandings, and our lives, according to the pure and heavenly spirit

Spirit of his commandments? Surely the most ordinary understanding can see, that these EXTERNALS of Christianity, these PRINCIPLES, or beginnings, or introductions to a divine life cannot profit, unless they are a means of our attaining unto the internal things, the ends and intentions signified by them.

Such mere outward professors of religion will do well to attend to these words of the Lord, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."* In the same manner may the outward professor urge, Lord, have I not been baptized in thy name? have I not been introduced into thy church? have I not had thy mark stamped on my forehead? then will he say to such, "I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity;" ye that have nothing to plead but your external holiness, whilst ye have neglected to cleanse yourselves from iniquity within, without which cleansing no soul can be clean in my sight.

Having thus then considered the great danger and absurdity of resting in the mere PRINCIPLES,
or

* Matt. vii. 22. 23.

or outward form of baptism, I shall now proceed to point out the nature, reasonableness and blessedness of going on to PERFECTION in that holy ordinance.

The PERFECTION of the holy ordinance of baptism is thus expressed to us in holy Scripture, where speaking of the Lord Jesus it is said of him, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;*" and in another place, "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;†" and in another, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;‡" and again, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;*" and lastly, "Wash ye; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.†"

In these several passages of holy scripture are made known to us the INTERNAL nature and uses of baptism, as represented by the EXTERNAL form and sign thereof, and which consist, according to the true sense of those passages, first, in the soul's

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* Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 33.

† Galat. iii. 27. ‡ Acts ii. 38.

* Romans vi. 4. † Isaiah 16, 17.

purification from evil, signified by PUTTING AWAY THE EVIL OF OUR DOINGS, by THE REMISSION OF SINS, and being BURIED WITH CHRIST BY BAPTISM UNTO DEATH, and secondly, in it's renewal, growth, and advancement in a divine and holy life, signified by LEARNING TO DO WELL, by PUTTING ON CHRIST, and by being BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE.

For baptism denotes washing; and washing may be either NATURAL OR SPIRITUAL, either applied to the BODY OR TO THE SOUL; the body is washed, we know, with NATURAL water, but the soul, or spirit, is washed with SPIRITUAL water; for there is spiritual water, as well as there is natural water; spiritual water is the divine truth of God's holy word, and it is of this water our Lord speaks when he says, "He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of LIVING WATER;"* and in another place, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee LIVING WATER;"† and accordingly Jehovah in the prophet calls himself the FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS.‡ spiritual water therefore cometh from the Lord Jesus Christ, the manifested Jehovah, and is his heavenly gift to all that truly believe on him; and man

* John vii. 38. † John iv. 10. ‡ Jerem. ii. 13.

man cometh to this water, and washeth in it, and thereby receives true spiritual BAPTISM, or purification, when he converts himself unto Jesus Christ as his God, and the fountain of all divine good and truth, and lives a life conformable to his commandments, in putting away all evils of the flesh and spirit, and willing, and thinking, and doing the thing that is right.

Here then we may see plainly what is meant by going on to perfection in the sacrament of baptism: It is to go on by repentance and obedience towards the thorough purification of our souls from all evil; from every defilement of sin and uncleanness; from the corrupt workings of the old man in the vanities and lusts of selfish, sensual and worldly love; and it is in this spirit of repentance and obedience to turn unto Jesus Christ as the manifested Jehovah, the fountain of all good and truth, to receive from him the BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST AND OF FIRE; that is, to put on his divine wisdom and divine love; to let this his holy spirit rule in our hearts, and in our lives, till it be perfectly formed in us; till it hath fashioned us anew in the regeneration, "after the image and likeness of him that made us;" till we are rendered meek and merciful, kind and charitable, patient and contented, lovers of God, and lovers one of another, as the gospel was designed to make

us; or as the apostle expresseth it, till "according
 " to his mercy we be saved by the WASHING
 " OF REGENERATION, AND RENEWING
 " OF THE HOLY GHOST."*

And what now, beloved, can be more reasonable, what more blessed than to go on towards this PERFECTION in the true sacrament of baptism? For if to be purified from the disorders of a sinful, a miserable nature; if to be delivered from the errors and delusions of a vain, a false, a worldly wisdom and happiness; if to have our souls opened to the reception of their chief, their only good, and our eyes to the contemplation of the most beautiful, the most glorious objects; if to be admitted to conjunction with Jesus Christ and his holy angels, and to be made partakers thereby of a divine nature; if to have enkindled in our souls an holy and heavenly fire, even the fire of sacred love and charity, to burn up all that is contrary to itself, and make us alive thereby unto the bliss of heaven; if to be thus changed from men into angels, and from being DEAD IN SIN to be made ALIVE UNTO GOD; from being blind in ignorance, to be made to see by the wisdom of God; from being asleep in vanity, and wickedness, and misery of this world, to be made awake unto the realities, purities, and blessedness of an eternal existence in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. If, I say

* Tit. iii. 5.

say, there be any thing reasonable, any thing blessed, in any, or in all of these things, then it is surely equally reasonable, it is surely equally blessed to press forwards daily, in repentance and faith, towards the PERFECTION of that spiritual baptism by which alone they are to be attained.

Are we resting then in any PRINCIPLES or NOTIONS of baptism, short of this it's true nature and PERFECTION? Oh, let us consider earnestly how much injury we are doing thereby to our own souls, by taking up with signs, and forms, and figures, and neglecting to enter into the substance, solidity, and comfort of the divine institution. Let us bethink ourselves, in time, how little will the SIGN of the cross, or the NAME of a christian, or the washing of OUTWARD water, profit us at that day, when we are to stand at the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, if we have nothing else at that time to plead for us. Will the Lord, think we, accept the washing, or baptism of the body, for that of the spirit? or the sign of the cross marked on the forehead, for the crucifixion of the flesh? or the name of a Christian for the nature, tempers, life, and fruits of his followers? Surely, if we have mistaken those external things for the internal things they were to represent, they will then but rise up in judgment against us, and instead of availing us in the matter of salvation, they will but serve to aggravate our condemnation.

On the other hand, let us impress deeply on our minds the infinite blessedness and high reasonableness of GOING ON TO PERFECTION in the true INWARD baptism signified by the OUTWARD washing of water. By so doing we shall become truly clean in God's sight; our sins through repentance will be REMITTED, that is, they will be put away and separated from us, that they cannot hurt us; whilst by faith and love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall experience daily the power of his resurrection enabling us to walk in the newness and blessedness of a divine life; thus shall we proceed from the OUTWARD to the true INWARD baptism of the spirit, till being washed from all the uncleanness of selfish, and sensual, and worldly love, we become renewed in that image of heavenly love and charity, and good works, which hath peace with God here, and hereafter is admitted into THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT.

And O merciful Jesus, the AUTHOR AND FINISHER of this heavenly baptism, give us all, we beseech thee, a right faith and love towards thee, that believing thee to be Jehovah manifested in the flesh, and walking in the ways of thy commandments, we may ever approach unto thee as OUR ONLY God, and have conjunction with thee through thy Word, and thereby experience that thou art indeed "the fountain opened FOR SIN

AND

AND UNCLEANNESS!"* And give us grace, O Lord, so to continue stedfast and patient in washing at this FOUNTAIN, that every spot and defilement of sin may finally be done away, and our "flesh may come again as the flesh of a little child, and we may be cured of our leprogies!"
AMEN.

* Zech, xiii. 1.

SERMON XI.

HEB. vi. Part of 1st Verse.

Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of CHRIST, let us go on to Perfection.

WE shall now proceed to apply the above reasoning to the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper.

There is but too much cause to fear that many stop in the PRINCIPLES of this most holy ordinance; they think it enough to be partakers once in a month of the outward bread and wine distributed at the Lord's table; and if at such times they do but call to their remembrance what Christ hath done and suffered for them, and feel in themselves some kind of tenderness and affection, excited by such remembrance, they fancy they have done their duty perfectly, and are sincere and worthy receivers of that most holy sacrament.

But

But, beloved, permit me to caution you not to deceive yourselves in a matter of such high consequence; the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper hath both an outward and an inward part; the outward part is "the bread and wine, which the Lord commanded to be received;" the inward part is the **REAL BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST**, of which it is said by the Lord himself, "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."* If then we rest contented with the outward part, without seeking after the inward and essential part, the **LIFE-GIVING FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN**, how plain is it to see that we deprive our souls of that part which can alone be profitable to our salvation!

For what can the mere outward bread and wine do towards the saving of a soul, that is, towards it's nourishment in a divine life? those elements can reach no higher than the body, and can affect only the animal nature; they cannot reach the soul, or convey to it any divine grace or virtue; it is the **FLESH AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST**, that is, his holy love, his pure wisdom, which can alone profit and nourish the soul; to be satisfied therefore with receiving outward bread and wine, without looking for and feeding on some more inward

* John vi. 53.

ward and spiritual food represented by them, is the grossest and most dangerous delusion.

Hence it is, that some who frequent the Lord's table, when they depart from it, live like the rest of the world, in the same spirit of worldly-mindedness, vanity and dissipation, with as little of the spirit of Jesus Christ in their hearts, as if they had never been at his table at all: the reason is, because they have received nothing there but the outward elements of bread and wine; they have rested contented with the mere FORM and SHEW of approaching the Lord's table, without partaking of the SPIRITUAL, the HEAVENLY food there provided; thus they have left their souls unused, un-nourished, un-edified, in any thing truly holy; and the certain consequence of such conduct must necessarily be, that when they are departed from the outward ceremony, they will return again to the same state and temper of mind which they brought thither, because their hearts and inward habits have undergone no change.

All such persons will do well to consider the case of that man in the gospel, who being invited, went to the marriage, but HAD NOT ON A WEDDING-GARMENT, to whom the king said, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding-garment, and he was speechless; then said the king unto the servants, bind him hand and

“ and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.* Even so will the Lord say unto all those who approach his table, and feed only on bread and wine, without thinking of, much less feeding on the inward things signified thereby; Friend, how camest thou to my table with such carnal notions and dispositions? couldst thou not have known that mere bread and wine cannot nourish and strengthen thy soul? couldst thou not have discerned under them, “ my flesh, which is meat indeed, and my “ blood which is drink indeed?† Wherefore then didst thou not come prepared in true repentance and charity, to see and to feed on that spiritual and heavenly food, which I give to those that desire it, and which would have truly nourished in thee a divine and eternal life?—Then will all such carnal guests remain SPEECHLESS at these questions, and the Lord will say to his servants, “ Bind them hand and foot, and cast them into “ outer darkness.”

Having thus then considered the danger of resting in the PRINCIPLES, that is, in the OUTWARD FORM or SIGN of the Lord's supper, I shall now proceed to point out the nature, reasonableness and blessedness of going on to PERFECTION in that holy ordinance.

The PERFECTION of the sacrament of the
Lord's

* Matt. xxii. 11, 12, 13. † John vi. 55.

Lord's supper, together with the nature and manner of our progress towards it, is thus described to us in holy Scripture. "Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst;" and again, "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world;" and again, "verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him: he that eateth me, even he shall live by me;* and in the Revelations, "Behold (saith the Lord) I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,"† again, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb."‡ It is written also of the same spiritual food, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;"§ and hence

* John vi. 35, 31, 53, 54, 57. † Rev. iii. 20. ‡ Rev. xix. 9, § Deut viii. 3.

hence come divers exhortations and admonitions, as where it is said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled ;*" and in another place, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you ;†" Not to mention many other passages of scripture to the same purport.

From the true and plain sense of all the above passages taken collectively, we learn in general, that there is SPIRITUAL FOOD as well as NATURAL OR MATERIAL FOOD ; there is also a SPIRITUAL HUNGER and THIRST as well as a NATURAL HUNGER and THIRST ; there is besides a SPIRITUAL EATING and DRINKING, as well as a NATURAL EATING and DRINKING ; and lastly, that as the BODY, OR BODILY LIFE, is nourished, strengthened, and refreshed, by taking proper quantities of natural nourishment, that is, of natural meat and drink of a wholesome quality, so the SPIRIT, OR SPIRITUAL LIFE, is also nourished, strengthened, and refreshed by taking proper quantities of spiritual meat and drink, of a wholesome quality.

But what shall we say is this spiritual meat and drink, of a wholesome quality, which is thus necessary for spiritual nourishment ? We are inform-

* Matt. v. 6. Isaiah lv. 1. 2. † John vi. 27.

ed in the same scripture, that it is the real BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST; but whereas the body and blood of JESUS CHRIST are things SPIRITUAL, and not things MATERIAL; and whereas all spiritual things have reference to love and wisdom, or to goodness and truth, JESUS CHRIST being the most essential love and goodness, and the most essential wisdom and truth, we may hence conclude of a certainty, that by the BODY OF CHRIST, or spiritual meat, is meant the life-giving principle of his essential love or goodness, and by the BLOOD OF CHRIST, or spiritual drink, is meant the life-giving principle of his essential wisdom or truth. This he calls his FLESH, which HE GIVES FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD; the reason is, because all true eternal life is the life of love and wisdom, or of goodness and truth, and this life is from JESUS CHRIST ALONE, the manifested Jehovah, and no man can partake of this life but so far as he receives it from JESUS CHRIST.

Behold here then what is the real essential food administered at the holy table of the Lord's Supper, as declared to us in the above scriptures; but we are further taught how we are to partake of that food,

This is made known to us in these words, "If
 " any man hear my voice and open the door, I
 " will come to him and sup with him, and he
 with

“ with me ;” and again, “ Blessed are they that
 “ hunger and thirst after righteousness ;” and again,
 “ He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he
 “ that believeth on me shall never thirst ;” and
 again, “ Labour not for the meat that perisheth,
 “ but for that meat which endureth to everlasting
 “ life.”

From these, and many other similar passages of
 holy scripture, we are plainly taught, how we
 may partake of the real substantial living food
 which JESUS CHRIST gives, and which is JESUS
 CHRIST, and how we may be nourished thereby in
 a heavenly or eternal life---we must “ hear his
 “ voice, and open the door ;” we must “ hunger
 “ and thirst after his righteousness ;” we must
 “ come unto him, and believe on him ;” we must
 “ labour for that meat” which he gives.

It may be expedient to observe that a distinction
 is here made between “ hearing the voice of
 “ Jesus Christ,” and “ opening the door” to
 him ; as also between “ hungering and thirsting
 “ after righteousness ;” and likewise between
 “ coming to Christ, and believing on him.” This
 distinction is very remarkable, and if well attend-
 ed to, will unfold to us the nature of spiritual
 nourishment, in a most edifying, solid, and satisf-
 factory manner. The distinction is grounded on
 that which was made above, between the BODY
 and the BLOOD of Christ, or between LOVE and

WISDOM, between GOODNESS and TRUTH; that is, between MEAT and DRINK; for as the natural or bodily life of man is nourished, not by material meat ALONE, or by material drink ALONE, but by proper quantities of EACH united, even so his spiritual life is nourished, not by spiritual meat ALONE, or by spiritual drink ALONE, that is, not by love ALONE, or by wisdom ALONE, not by goodness ALONE, or by truth ALONE, not by the body of Christ ALONE, or by his blood ALONE, but by a proper union and commixture of EACH of these spiritual principles together.

Accordingly we find, that agreeable to this distinction between spiritual MEAT and DRINK, there are two different parts or principles in man, adapted to the reception of these different kinds of nourishment; the one is the WILL, the other the UNDERSTANDING; each of these parts, or principles, hath its proper FOOD OR NOURISHMENT; each also hath its HUNGER and THIRST; the proper food and nourishment of the will is LOVE; and every thing appertaining to love, as goodness, charity, and the like; and the proper food or nourishment of the understanding is WISDOM, and every thing appertaining to wisdom, as truth, knowledge, and the like, the DESIRE OF LOVE in the will is its HUNGER, and the DESIRE OF WISDOM in the understanding is its THIRST; the WILL therefore, with the converted and regenerate christian

christian, receives and feeds on the BODY of CHRIST; that is, on his love, goodness, &c. and his understanding receives and feeds on the BLOOD of CHRIST, that is, on his wisdom, truth, &c. thus the will HUNGERS, the understanding THIRSTS; the will COMES TO Christ, the understanding BELIEVES ON HIM: the will HEARS THE VOICE OF Christ, the understanding OPENS THE DOOR TO him; both the will and the understanding, however, receive nourishment from Christ, even the nourishment of his eternal ever-blessed life, and with the truly humble, penitent, and obedient disciples, these two principles are ONE, forming ONE mind, constituting ONE heavenly man, a form of incomparable order, harmony, and beauty, and ever acting in perfect UNITY; they are capable nevertheless of being divided, and they are so divided with all those, who KNOW and UNDERSTAND what is right and good, but who do not LOVE and PRACTICE it. It appears to be the great and blessed end of the Lord and his gospel to man, to unite these two parts or principles, to restore them to due subordination, to give each its proper food and nourishment, and thereby supply each with its true life, strength and perfection; and this end is fulfilled, when man, with his WILL-PRINCIPLE hungers after, feeds upon, and daily grows in the divine life of LOVE or GOODNESS, by coming to JESUS CHRIST, forsaking sin,

and obeying the holy commandments, and with his UNDERSTANDING thirsts after, drinks into, and is daily refreshed by the DIVINE WISDOM or TRUTH of JESUS CHRIST, by believing on him, and treasuring up in itself his heavenly words, counsels, and instructions.

Behold here then the true nature of the PERFECTION of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, together with the nature and manner of our PROGRESS towards it. And need any thing now be said on the reasonableness and blessedness of thus going on to perfection in this holy sacrament? for what can be more reasonable than that we should give our souls their proper food? Every creature, we find, hath its appointed food proper for its support and nourishment, and if it be deprived of that food it presently grows weak and dies. Our bodies have their appointed food, without which neither their health, strength or life can possibly be preserved; and so it is also with our souls; only let it be remembered that the food of the soul is spiritual, according as it is written, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" to deny ourselves then spiritual food is of all things most unreasonable, being a kind of self-murder, whereby we kill and destroy in our souls the principle of a divine and heavenly life; but to give our souls this food, to feed and nourish, to strengthen and refresh

fresh our spiritual part with the word of God, with the body and blood of Christ, with a participation of love and wisdom, from the Lord Jesus; to grow thus from babes unto perfect men; to form in ourselves the man of God thoroughly furnished unto all good works; to feed thus upon the "hidden manna," and to eat the fruit of the tree of life, which is "in the midst of the paradise of God;" * to be admitted thus to the banquet of angels, and to eat bread in the kingdom of God; what can be more reasonable, what more blessed than the participation of such a sacrament?

And yet, reasonable and blessed as all this must appear to sober, unprejudiced minds, it is to be feared that but few comparatively taste and experience the real blessedness and reasonableness thereof. Alas! we too many of us sit down satisfied and contented with the principles and outward forms of godliness, lulling thus our consciences into a deep sleep, that we cannot hear the voice which would call us to a more inward and substantial devotion. We take up with the outside and shell of religion, the husk, if I may so call it, of the divine mercy, and for want of a true repentance and inward conversion of heart, to the Lord of heaven, we never enter in to taste of the kernel, to feed on the "feast of fat things"

* Rev. ii. 7. 17.

“ things, the feast of wines on the lees ; of fat
 “ things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well
 “ refined, which the Lord of hosts hath made in
 “ his holy mountain unto all people” * that truly
 fear him and keep his commandments. Thus we
 starve our souls in the midst of plenty, and instead
 of being nourished and strengthened in a divine
 life, through a daily participation of heavenly
 food, we remain day after day in the same weak,
 sickly, and puny state, as to our spiritual man, that
 we were in when we first drew breath.

But brethren these things ought not so to be ;
 such conduct will not bear us up when we come
 into another world ; it may serve to blind the eyes
 of men, but it cannot escape the notice of God ; it
 may lull our consciences to sleep here, but it can-
 not make us awake hereafter to the joys of eter-
 nity. Oh then, let us deal more fairly and rea-
 sonably with our souls ; “ leaving the principles
 “ of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to per-
 “ fection ;” to perfection in the love and wisdom
 of the Lord Jesus Christ ; to perfection in that
 heavenly life, that heavenly nature, which he
 wanteth to form in us, and to communicate to us ;
 to perfection in all holy charity, goodness, meek-
 ness, righteousness, temperance, and all other vir-
 tues of the Christian life, to the full removal of
 sin and self, and all the powers of evil and dark-
 ness.

ness. Let me not however here be misunderstood, as if it was my intention to call any from a constant participation of THE OUTWARD FORM of this holy sacrament. No; THE MOST PERFECT followers of Jesus Christ will assuredly find such outward visible communion of his body and blood expedient and profitable for them, whilst they continue in the tabernacle of flesh and they will ever be thankful for every opportunity of sitting down with their brethren at the holy feast; but then they will know, and be taught of the Lord, what is the true end and design of this VISIBLE communion, viz. to lead them to feed DAILY on the heavenly food by INVISIBLE communion with their God and Saviour, according to that petition in the Holy Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread;" thus by the outward sacrament they will find excited in them a greater HUNGER AND THIRST after the inward Sacrament of RIGHTEOUSNESS, which is the LIVING BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST in their own souls.

And may all who name the name of Christ be led to a daily participation of this INWARD sacrament! may all taste its sweetness! may all experience its life-giving virtues! may all for this purpose come unto Jesus Christ, the manifested Jehovah, who is the only giver of the heavenly food! But oh! may all be careful to come in the spirit of a true repentance, in humility and meekness of mind,

mind, with a real desire to depart from sin, and to walk in the NEWNESS of a regenerate life! then should we enter indeed into the substance and comfort of the gospel covenant. Then should we no longer deceive ourselves with mere forms and shadows of things without life, but we should be led through FORMS to their ESSENCES, through SHADOWS to their living and eternal REALITIES. For then advancing daily in the regeneration, and being daily fed with the body and blood of JESUS CHRIST in our inner man, we should grow continually thereby; we should know this to be THE MEAT WHICH ENDURETH TO EVERLASTING LIFE; and we should thankfully experience its heavenly virtues, in forming in us that new and heavenly man, which would have power over all evil, and rejoice evermore in fulfilling all the will of God, and standing in the kingdom of his eternal purity and peace.

And O holy Jesus, excite in us, we beseech thee, the spirit of a true repentance and conversion to thee, that so we may no longer delight to feed upon the husks of mere carnal and worldly consolations, but that HUNGERING and THIRSTING after thy RIGHTEOUSNESS, we may know and taste the superior delights of thy love and truth; and enjoying thus the peace of continual communion with thee, may thus partake DAILY of the sacrament of thy blessed body and blood, and

and experience thus a DAILY growth in thy heavenly life, till from BABES we become MEN, from NATURAL become SPIRITUAL, and from the PRINCIPLES of thy doctrine make continual advances towards PERFECTION; AMEN.

SERM. XI.

THE

THE
NECESSITY, NATURE, AND MANNER
OF
SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION

OPENED AND EXPLAINED;

IN FOUR SERMONS.

SERMON XII.

ISAIAH i. Part of 16th Verse.

Wash ye, make you clean.

AT this holy season, which is more especially consecrated to the commemoration of our blessed Redeemer's sufferings, and set apart as a time for a more vigorous mortification of sinful appetites, I know of no subject more suitable for our attention than that of SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION

tion suggested in the words of my text. To shew the necessity, and manner, and blessed effect of such purification, and to supply us with power to accomplish it, was the great end of our Lord's whole process, of all his sorrows, and of all his labours; of his coming down into this world of sin, and of his return to his former glory. This process of our Redeemer's can be of no avail to us, only so far as it leads us to the end thereof; and therefore the design of the commemoration of this process cannot be better answered by us, than whilst we take into attentive serious consideration that most weighty and important duty of spiritual washing or purification.

As a means conducive to so good a purpose, I shall endeavour, in the course of this holy season, to set before you the ground and measures and extent of the duty of spiritual purification; to exhibit which in a fuller and more distinct view, that so it may make its proper impression on our hearts, I propose to consider it under these four general divisions;

- 1st. The NECESSITY of spiritual purification;
- 2dly. The NATURE AND EFFECT thereof;
- 3dly. The MANNER of its accomplishment;
- 4thly. The REASONS why the generality of christians make such small advances, and experience so little of the power and comforts arising from this duty.

In my present discourse I shall confine myself to the consideration of the NECESSITY of spiritual washing, or purification; and may all our minds, through the divine grace, be rightly prepared for so weighty a consideration!

Every one, who has ever examined his own heart by the light of God's holy word, with a sincere purpose to depart from all iniquity, and to please God, and to prepare for his heavenly kingdom, must needs have been convinced within himself of the necessity of spiritual washing and cleansing.

For by such examination he must needs have discovered in himself, in his affections, in his thoughts, and in his actions, many defilements contrary to the purity of God and heaven; he must needs have found that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and that these two are contrary the one to the other,"* he must needs have experienced "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members;†" he must needs have felt in himself somewhat of what the apostle calls "the body of death,‡" and that in consequence thereof, "when he would do good, evil is present with him;§ he must consequently have learnt that all is not right with him; that in his natural state he

* Gal. v. 17. † Rom. vii. 23. ‡ Rom. vii. 24. § Rom. vii. 21.

from his purity; let us regard ourselves here as in a fallen state of things, in which it is become necessary to "take up a daily cross,*" and to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling;†" let us learn to read both in our own hearts, and in God's Word, and in the outward world, and in our outward bodies, the marks and characters of transgression and estrangement from heaven and its purity; and then both our own hearts, and God's Word, and the outward world, and our very bodily infirmities, will all hold forth to us most excellent lessons of edifying wisdom and instruction: for then all will tell us this awful truth, that we are very corrupt, and stand in need of purification before we can be clean in God's sight, and have a place in his kingdom; but they will all add too this comfortable truth for our strength and consolation, that the means of our purification are as near to us as our defilements; and that if we apply diligently unto those means, looking sincerely unto God, then our very disorders and defilements will tend to help forward our purification, and that because it is written, "All things work together for good to them that love God;‡" and in another place, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of;§" thus the conviction of sin will
 shew

* Matth. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23. † Philip ii. 12.

‡ Rom. viii. 28.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

show us the need of purification; the need of purification will lead us to conversion; conversion will bring us to JESUS CHRIST in repentance and obedience; and through repentance and obedience to Jesus Christ and his gospel we shall assuredly sooner or later experience purification from every defilement, and deliverance from all our sins, sorrows, and disorders.

than God? Who therefore cannot here further see the ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION?

The holy scriptures throughout are for ever impressing upon us this great truth concerning the natural corruptions and defilements of the human heart through sin, and the consequent necessity of cleansing and purification through the spirit of holiness. We there learn the origin of our present natural filthiness, and opposition to the love and law of God, that it is derived from the disobedience of our first parents, and has received accumulation ever since from the transgressions of successive generations. The language of scripture on this head is very full and explicit, "They are all gone
" out of the way, they are altogether become abominable, there is none that doeth good, no not
" one:" * "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted
" his way upon the earth:" † "Ah sinful nation,
" a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters,
" they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel to anger, they are
" gone away backward;" "from the sole of the
" foot even unto the head there is no soundness
" in it:" ‡ To which many may be added the
" testimony of St. Paul, "For all have sinned,
" and fallen short of the glory of God;" § and of

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St.

* Psalm, xiv. 4. † Gen. vi. 12. ‡ Isaiah, i. 4, 5, 6. § Rom. iii. 23.

St. John, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his Word is not in us."* But whilst the holy records bear testimony to our natural corruptions, and defilements, and great estrangements from God and his purity and peace, they bear testimony also to remedies proportionable to our disorders; they point out infallible methods of cleansing and purification; they console and support us under the certainty of those methods if we will but apply to them; this, in short, is the very sum and substance of the holy scriptures or word of God; they convince the humble and obedient soul of its filthiness and abomination through sin; they point out the nature and manner of spiritual purification and restoration through holiness, or a return to God; thus the holy scriptures join their witness with that of our own hearts, and will convince every considerate person, who wants conviction, of the ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION AND CLEANSING.

But there is still a further testimony of this truth, if we yet want a further, to be collected from the state of the visible creation, and from our outward bodies. The wisdom of this world, I am well aware, makes light of this testimony, accounting the outward visible world, and our present outward

* 1. John, i. 8, 10.

outward corrupt and disordered bodies, to be in that state in which God created them, and that they have suffered no change through sin. In like manner the wisdom of this world is unwilling to allow of any corruption in the human spirit; but, beloved, let us hearken herein to a better wisdom, which will teach us, that "the whole creation, " groaneth and travaileth in pain together until " now;*" and that our very bodies are defiled and distempered by reason of sin. For, whence, let us ask, come the disorders of creation causing it TO GROAN AND TRAVAIL? or whence come the various pains and disorders of our bodies? God, it is plain, did not cause them, for we read, "he saw " all things which he had made, and behold they " were very good:†" They must needs therefore " have originated in sin, and every serious mind will certainly refer them to this their true and only source.

In short, beloved, let us look into our own hearts, let us look into the oracles of God, let us look into the whole frame and constitution of the visible world; let us examine the HEIGHT AND THE DEPTH, things within us, and things without us, we shall every where see impressed and engraven, in most legible characters, this great truth, that man hath miserably estranged himself from the purity of God; that he is not at present what his good

* Rom. viii. 22.

† Gen. i. 31.

good creator intended him to be; that both in his inward and outward man, both in his soul and body, he hath contracted dreadful disorder, pollution and filthiness; and consequently STANDS IN NEED OF SPIRITUAL CLEANSING AND PURIFICATION, before he can be meet to enter into the regions of peace and purity.

To conclude—Let us labour, beloved, to impress these great and weighty truths on our hearts, with all that power of conviction which their importance demands. Let us no longer study, by any artificial refinements of human wisdom, or by a false reasoning blinded by vain self-love, to hide from ourselves our natural defilements; for this is to reject the wisdom of God, and the convictions of enlightened reason, and the demonstrations of sober experience, to be deluded by a specious folly, which would lead us to destruction. Let us rather strive to discover our impurities, to bring them all to the light, to make them manifest both to God and ourselves. It is surely better we should know our disorders, than that they should escape our notice, because in the former case we may remove them, whereas in the latter case they must remain unremoved, and consequently increasing in malignancy. Let us then be bold to open our eyes to the truth, and to desire God to open them; let us beseech him, through the light of his holy spirit, to shew us all our secret sins, all our departures from

he is "alienated from the life of God;*" that he is far from the divine purity and righteousness; that he falls infinitely short of fulfilling the will of God; consequently that he has need of some inward purification, whereby his heart and life may be rendered more conformable and acceptable to his Creator.

But to be more particular—Let us consider the natural state of man's heart only in relation to the great law of charity, or mutual love, and learn thence the necessity of spiritual purification. The law of charity, or mutual love, requires, that we should love each other AS OURSELVES; which certainly implies, that we should commiserate another's sorrows, rejoice in his joys, and relieve his distresses, as if they were our own; but who now amongst us by nature fulfills, or can fulfill, this great and pure law of charity? Who that examines himself sincerely, and in the presence of God, by this law, doth not find reason to mourn at his great distance and departure from it? For who doth not find in himself by nature a contrary law of much self love ruling and working, whereby he is led to love himself better than others; to think better of himself than others; to wish better to himself than to others; nay, even to despise others in comparison with himself; to make light of their sorrows; to envy, rather than rejoice in, their joys and prosperities; in short, to be very

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* Ephes. iv. 18

indifferent how it fares with his neighbour, provided that all doth but go well with himself? Who, I say, amongst us, that hath seriously examined his own heart, doth not find something of such a lawless and uncharitable spirit of defilement therein, opposite to the heavenly spirit of mutual and neighbourly love? Who therefore cannot hence learn the ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION?

And if there be such opposition in us by nature to the law of charity, or neighbourly love, what shall we say in respect to the higher and more pure love of God? Is there a man on earth, whose heart, by nature, is framed according to the purity of this law? Who can say, that he loves God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength? Who doth not perceive many defilements of selfish and worldly and fleshly love contrary to this pure and heavenly spirit? many affections, many desires, many appetites, that are not rightly subordinate thereto? Who can say that his own will is entirely submissive to the will of God; that his own wisdom is entirely guided by the wisdom of God; that his daily actions are in all things governed by the spirit and love of God? Who rather does not experience, that the things of this world and the flesh, and the vanities of his own selfish heart, have gained much power over him, and that by nature he respects and obeys these more
than

S E R M O N XIII.

ISAIAH i. Part of 16th Verse.

Wash ye, make you clean.

HAVING shewn, in the preceding discourse, the NECESSITY of spiritual washing, or purification, I shall now proceed to consider, as I proposed, the NATURE, and blessed EFFECT of that holy duty.

Many Christians, it is to be feared, fall into the greatest and most dangerous mistakes on this subject; for want of considering aright the TRUE NATURE of spiritual purification; they remain all their lives strangers to its blessed efficacy; thus many suppose purification to consist merely in a change of the outward man, or in the regulation of their external actions only; they will give alms occasionally to the poor; they will frequent the public worship of God; they will partake of di-
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vine ordinances ; they will at times read good and holy books ; they will repeat many prayers, and even think and talk about God and holy things ; and they fancy that in so doing they are pure in the sight of God, and are cleansed from sin ; when possibly their inward man has nevertheless undergone no change ; their tempers, and inclinations, and inward habits are like those of the rest of the world, their happinesses and pleasures, their griefs and sorrows, have no higher a source than those of the most impure amongst men ; they remain lovers of themselves, lovers of the world, lovers of vanity and fleshly delights, as if they had never heard the name of God ; in short, notwithstanding the decency of their OUTWARD conduct, the true love of God, and of their neighbour, and the inward purity and peace of mind thence derived, are unknown to them ; and although they NAME THE NAME OF CHRIST with their lips, yet for want of DEPARTING FROM INIQUITY, they are void of the purifying power and love of Christ in their hearts.

Too many, I say, it is to be feared, amongst those who call themselves Christians, fall into this mistaken and dangerous idea of spiritual purification, whereby they greatly deceive themselves, and hinder the progress of their salvation.

But, beloved, need I be at any pains to expose before you the falseness and fatal delusion of such an

an idea? or rather, do not you perceive it manifest in your own minds? Do not you find something FROM WITHIN dictating to you, that such outward form of purification can of itself be of no avail in the sight of God? Is there not A TEACHER IN YOUR HEARTS which saith, and which would convince you, if you would hearken to it, that true purification, acceptable to God, and profitable to man, must be that of the INWARD MAN, according to these words of the Lord, "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also;*" and according to the prayer of the psalmist, "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.†"

Yes, beloved, if we would all of us put away our iniquities, and hearken diligently to the true teaching of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, in our minds, we should then no longer mistake the true nature of spiritual purification, for then we should all be TAUGHT OF GOD wherein it consisted, and wherein it did not consist; we should see by his light that our washing and cleansing must first begin with the INWARD man, with the heart, with the will, with the desires and affections, to render these pure in the sight of God; and thence it must descend to the OUTWARD man, regulating the understanding and the external actions, according

*Matt. xxii. 25.

† Psalm li. 10.

cording to the purity of the law of God in the inward man.

Let me bespeak your serious attention, beloved, whilst I further unfold to you the NATURE of spiritual purification, according to this true and scriptural notion thereof, as it must be manifested to every considerate mind.

It is the current testimony of experience, and of the holy scriptures throughout, that the impurities of man have their place in the HEART, or in what may be called the will-principle, whence all his desires and affections are derived. This was very fully proved in the preceding discourse, wherein it was shewn, how exceeding corrupt man's heart or will-principle is by nature; how in consequence thereof he loves himself and this world better than God and his neighbour; how he serves the flesh more than the spirit; how he delights in vanity and sin more than in truth and righteousness; how in short, his whole life in his natural state is governed by wrong ends and designs, in consequence whereof he sets temporal things above things eternal, this world above another, the body above the soul, shadows above substances, death above life, and to sum up all in a word, himself above God, thus inverting the order, disturbing the peace, and destroying the harmony of the creation of God.

Behold

Behold here a just picture of man's impurity and corruptions by nature ! It consists in this impure, false, and sinful state of his heart, or will-principle, and of all his desires and affections, and thoughts therein originating. What enlightened eye then cannot here see plainly into the true nature of spiritual purity, and in what it must needs consist ? For if impurity consists in loving ourselves and the world better than God and our neighbour, purity must surely needs consist in loving God and our neighbour better than ourselves and the world. If impurity again consists in obeying the flesh more than the spirit, purity then must surely needs consist in obeying the spirit more than the flesh. Again if through impurity we delight in sin and vanity, more than in truth and righteousness, through purification we shall be enabled to delight in truth and righteousness more than in sin and vanity ; our love-affections will thus be cleansed and renewed ; the governing ends and designs of life will be changed ; the great and merciful God will be the chief and central object of our regard ; the things of his eternal kingdom will engage our chief concern ; we shall see the things of this world and the flesh as nothing and mere emptiness, compared with those more substantial objects ; to gain the favour and mercy of Jesus Christ ; to secure a place in his love ; to prepare ourselves for his appearing ; to grow in

his grace and recover his holy image; to be renewed in our inner man by the pure spirit of his law and commandments; these will be the great ends and ruling designs of our lives; and whereas in the impurity of our natural state we reverse all order, oppose all truth, destroy all peace and harmony, by setting temporal things above eternal, this world above another, the body above the soul, as we advanced in purification, both order, truth, peace and harmony would be restored; every principle in our constitutions would have it's proper place and due subordination; the love of God and heaven would be above all, or in the inmost of the sanctuary; the love of our neighbour would be in the next or secondary place; whilst the love of ourselves, of this world, and the flesh, would be put down into the last and lowest place in this divine sub-ordination.

Thus, beloved, would real gospel purification, if we would come to the true experience thereof, affect our HEART or will-principle; but it would not rest here; it would affect also our UNDERSTANDINGS, our THOUGHTS, and our outward ACTIONS.

The understanding and thoughts of the natural man, whatsoever he may think to the contrary, partake of the impurities of his heart, or will-principle; and so also do his outward actions, howsoever they may appear outwardly pure and
holy

holy before men; the reason is, because whatever man is **WITHIN**, such must he needs be **WITHOUT**, inasmuch as outward things ever proceed from, and are similar to their inward essences.

Behold here the further progress of spiritual purification, and the blessed effects of that progress! It is the sure and happy consequence of a purification of the love, or will-principle, that the understanding, the thoughts, and outward actions partake thereof; whensoever the pure love of God is opened with power in the will, or heart, it presently descends into the lower powers and principles of the constitution; it first enlightens the understanding, which was before closed up and darkened through the false wisdom of selfish, worldly, and carnal love; it purifies the intellectual sight, fitting it thereby for the contemplation of divine objects; the purified Christian therefore sees with **NEW EYES**, and beholds an infinity of new and blessed objects of spiritual vision which he could not see before; he discerns between good and evil; he distinguishes well the natures and properties of each; he separates between the **CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN**, the **PRECIOUS AND THE VILE**; he knows what is of God and what is not of God in himself; he hath therefore all wisdom, but then it is a wisdom, which he knows is not his own, but of God; and therefore it doth not puff him up with vain pride, like the wisdom

of this world, for he finds that it is only to be attained and retained in deep humiliation; in short, he wills, he thinks, he does nothing, without considering and marking well, from what source or kingdom whether of good or evil, his will, his thoughts and actions proceed; thus he walks continually in the light of heaven, or, as it is otherwise called, THE LIGHT OF LIFE, according to those words of our blessed Lord, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"

And as the influences of true gospel purification extend thus from the HEART to the UNDERSTANDING, so they descend still further, and reach also to the OUTWARD ACTIONS; the purified Christian learns from the love of God this weighty lesson, "to let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, &c.†" he is therefore continually employed in some good and useful work, whereby he may glorify God, and do good in his station and calling to his fellow-creatures; he is taught the dreadful consequences of an indolent unprofitable life, that in such a case the love of God stagnates, and is unfruitful; whereas being brought into operation, there is a continual encrease and multiplication of the heavenly treasure; his works however are not hypocritical, not formal, not dead, not meritorious works; but they are the genuine fruits of an heaven-born charity;

* John viii. 2.

† Matth. v. 16.

urity; they proceed from a living principle within, which is the love and truth of God; they bring therefore their own reward with them, and he wishes, he desires nothing more than to advance daily in spiritual purification, that he may taste daily the purer pleasures of doing good.

Thus have I endeavoured, in some small degree to point out to you the nature and blessed effect of spiritual purification; I say, in some small degree, because whensoever you come to experience it in your own hearts and lives, ye will know that I have said very little in comparison of what you will find manifested in yourselves concerning it. May THE LITTLE however which has been said be a means of leading us all to look for more! May the spirit of God ingraft this LITTLE deeply in our hearts, and then it may become MUCH! for then it would lead us all to make the blessed experiment of spiritual purification in ourselves; we should no longer take it upon the testimony of others, but we should be convinced by the blessed and more powerful testimony of the love of God in our own bosoms. Oh then, let us hasten to look for this testimony! let us seek after the great and glorious God, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Regenerator, and Saviour, whose NAME is JESUS CHRIST; let us feel after the realities of his presence, and grace, and kingdom in us; let us labour for purification thereby from all our abominations
and

and natural filthiness; let us no longer walk after the wisdom of this world and the darkness of the flesh; let us open our hearts and eyes to the eternal love and the eternal light; then shall we know what purification means, and in what it consists; for we shall then distinguish between the clean and the unclean, the good and the evil, the temporal and the eternal, the dead and the living; and choosing the love and wisdom of JESUS CHRIST, and renouncing the love and wisdom of ourselves, we shall bear witness in our own bosoms to the blessedness which our Lord spake of when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*"

* Matth. v. 8.

SERMON XIII.

ISAIAH i. Part of 16th Verse.

Wash ye, make you clean.

IN the preceding discourses we have considered the NECESSITY and the NATURE of spiritual washing or purification, we shall now proceed as was before purposed, to point out the means and methods proper for the accomplishment of this blessed work.

But first, beloved, suffer me to bespeak your most serious attention to this important part of the subject under consideration; suffer me to call you to a particular application to God for a divine light to enlighten your minds herein; suffer me to press upon you the removal of all those prejudices and false appearances, which carnal wisdom may suggest,

suggest, that so your understandings may be rightly prepared to receive the light of truth.

There is the more need of such a preparation, inasmuch as many, it is to be feared, fall into the most fatal mistakes, at this day, in regard to the means and methods of spiritual purification. Some, for instance, suppose it to be the work of GOD ALONE, without man's having any part or concern in it; others on the contrary suppose it to be a work of MAN ALONE, without God's having any part or concern in it; both these notions are alike false and dangerous; the former leads to presumption, to carelessness, to spiritual sloth, and security; the latter leads to vain confidence, to boasting, to separation from God rather than conjunction with him, whilst the soul thinks to be saved merely by its own power and exertions. Several other mistakes, of a similar kind, might, if expedient, be here pointed out and exposed; as where it is imagined that man may be purified by some instantaneous operation of the divine grace; or by some act of arbitrary and irresistible mercy on the part of God; or by a life of faith and piety ALONE, without a moral life, that is the life of charity; or by a life of charity, ALONE, without a life of faith and piety at the same time; but all these, and other errors of the same kind, will be easily detected, whilst we consider and apprehend aright these two important particulars,

1st. What

1st. What GOD HAS TO DO, or what part he acts, in regard to man's purification; and 2dly. What MAN HAS TO DO, or what part is given him to act in this great work.

And may the God of all grace and mercy give us all eyes to see clearly, and understand effectually, and consider seriously, this awful subject, in which the salvation of all our souls is so nearly concerned! for none can be saved without spiritual purification.

First then, let us see what God has to do, and what part he acts, in regard to our purification, or spiritual washing.

God, we shall find, has very much to do in this great matter; for, first of all, he supplies us with the MEANS of spiritual washing, or purification; these means are very various; the first and chief to be mentioned is, HIS HOLY WORD, which proceeds from him, of which he is the essential life and spirit, and which he has given us as a stream, or river, or fountain of LIVING WATER for our spiritual cleansing; for the holy word of God, let it be well observed, is such LIVING WATER, and it is in reference thereto that Jehovah calls himself in the prophet "a fountain of living waters;*" for the same reason the Lord saith of every faithful one that believes on him, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;†" and in another place

* Jer. ii. 13.

† John vii. 38.

place, "Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall
 "thirst again, but whoso drinketh of the water
 "which I shall give him shall never thirst, but
 "the water which I shall give him shall be in him
 "a well of water springing up into eternal life:*"

It is for the same reason that mention is made of
 A RIVER OF WATER in the New Jerusalem,
 "He shewed me a pure river of water of life pro-
 "ceeding out of the throne of God and of the
 "Lamb;†" and therefore the Lord saith to his
 true disciples, "Now ye are clean through the
 "word which I have spoken unto you.‡"

Behold here then the first and chief means of
 spiritual purification! It is THE WORD OF GOD:
 None can be clean but who wash in this purifying
 and LIVING WATER; for the word of God teaches
 us what sin is, and how it is to be removed; it
 teaches us also what and who God is, and how
 we may approach unto him, and have conjunction
 with him; it informs us of a heaven and a hell
 and eternal life after death; it acquaints us how
 we may live hereafter eternally happy with God;
 in the holy word therefore is opened to the be-
 lieving soul all heavenly truth needful for salva-
 tion; this is THE WATER OF LIFE, and whosoever
 effectually washes in it, becomes clean from sin;
 but whosoever neglects to wash in it, sin and de-
 filement must needs abide in him.

God

* John iv. 13, 14.

† Rev. xxii. 1.

‡ John xv. 3.

God however has not only provided his word as a means of our purification; he has done, and continues to do still more for every one of us; for he supplies us all with grace and power to use this his word for purification, or in other words, to wash ourselves in this LIVING WATER; let us here stop awhile to consider and adore this great mercy of our God. It is the uniform language of the holy scriptures throughout, that God had ever an internal communication with the hearts of men; it is by virtue of this communication that he is enabled to bless man, by preserving him from the dominion of evil, and governing and guiding him by his holy spirit of peace and righteousness: when this blessed communication was nearly lost through man's sin, the merciful JEHOVAH, we learn, was pleased to open it anew, by assuming himself the nature of man, appearing here amongst men on earth, opening afresh his Word of truth and righteousness, combating and overcoming the powers of sin and darkness, removing them thus from men, and keeping them removed through the glorification of the human nature, which he finally made one with the Divine nature in the sacred person of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; thus communication was again restored between the Creator and his creatures through this visible Jehovah, and all who would believe on him, and receive him, under this manifestation,

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festation, had "power again given to become the
"sons of God.*"

Behold here then a further means of purification communicated unto man by God! Through the manifestation of Jehovah in the person of Jesus Christ, and in consequence of the redemption wrought thereby, power is given unto every man to work out his salvation, by purifying himself from sin. Let us attend to and observe well this heavenly gift that is in us; for who amongst us, that examines himself, will not find that he has this FREE GRACE and power from Jesus Christ? Who cannot, if he be so disposed, believe and look into the Word of God? Who cannot learn thence the things appertaining to salvation? Who cannot examine his heart and life thereby? Who cannot put away evil from his heart and life, as the holy Word enjoins? Who cannot thus look unto the God of this holy word, that is, "the Lord and Saviour
"Jesus Christ?" Who cannot believe on and love this redeeming God, and attain conjunction with him by keeping his holy commandments of love and charity? Who, I say, has not power from the Lord of heaven to do all this? Who cannot therefore believe and acknowledge, if he be so disposed, that this power is from the Lord, and is his continual gift to man for salvation?

Behold

* John i. 12.

Behold here then another means of spiritual purification supplied continually by God! He gives man the power and freedom of washing himself in the WATER OF LIFE, that is, his holy Word; he gives him the power and freedom of thus turning from sin, leading a new life, attaining regeneration, and becoming a pure child of heaven and righteousness; he gives him, and for ever supplies him with the power and freedom of rising out of every defilement, disorder, and misery of his present fallen state, and of regaining paradise, the bosom of God, the kingdom of the eternal liberty, rest, purity, and peace.

I might here add divers other innumerable means, which the mercy of God daily supplies for man's purification; such are his various external providences over us, both in the way of mercy and of judgment, of consolation and correction, of public and of private visitation; such are all the inward and outward troubles which all of us at times experience, though alas! we are apt to think little of their true ground and merciful intention; such are all those inward convictions of sin, and of the vanity of this world, and of the greatness of the things of God and eternity, which the spirit of God at times excites in the most thoughtless and abandoned souls. Such in short is the whole order and scheme of the Divine administration in this lower world, where every thing both in

general and in particular bespeaks the corruption of man through sin, and is a loud call upon him, and a powerful means, if he would listen to and obey it, to cleanse himself from ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT,

But it is time we should now hasten to see what MAN has to do, or what part HE has to act, in this great work of his spiritual washing, or purification.

We have seen what God hath done, and what he still continually does herein for man; it is possible however, and too many unhappy instances confirm that possibility, that what God has done, and continues to do, may all be in vain. Man, we see by daily experience, may reject God, and his Word, and stifle and extinguish the grace and power of God in his own heart; he may continue in sin and vanity and thoughtlessness, forgetting God and heaven, fighting against the convictions of God's holy spirit in his own mind, notwithstanding what God has done and does, to bring those convictions to good effect, by leading him to cleanse himself from sin.

Who then cannot hence see the necessity of man's doing something for himself, of his taking a part also with God, or, as the apostle expresseth it, "of profiting by the manifestation of the spirit,*" in the work of spiritual purification?

But

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

But what is that SOMETHING which man has to do, or what part is he to take herein?—Oh, that we were all enlightened with wisdom from above to give a right answer to this question! Oh that we did all, out of a real concern for salvation, discern the light of truth herein! oh, that for this purpose the Spirit of truth might now descend, and open in all our understandings the full force of these words of the prophet, which bring the most satisfactory and convincing information on this subject, “Wash
 “ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your
 “doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
 “learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the op-
 “pressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the
 “widows; then (observe this well) though your
 “sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
 “though they be red like crimson, they shall be as
 “wool.”*

Behold here, beloved, plainly declared unto us, what man has to do, what part he has to take, in regard to his spiritual purification! God has provided the means, but it is man's part to use and apply them, looking unto God. God gives man water to wash himself, he also gives him the power and freedom to wash himself, but it is for man to go to that water, and use the power and freedom of washing therein which God has given him. We
 may

* Isaiah i. 16, 17, 18.

may see a clear and familiar illustration of this in the case of natural or bodily washing. No man can wash his hands or his face without water; nor is it enough for him to have water, unless he hath also the power and freedom to use it; nor yet is it enough to have both water, power and freedom, unless he will further put his hands in the water and wash himself, according to the power and freedom he possesses; but if he have plenty of water, together with power and freedom, and be disposed to wash himself, he may then wash effectually.

Exactly similar to this is the case of spiritual washing; the water here is the **LIVING WATER** of heavenly truth, or the Word of God; man's freedom and power to wash therein is the continual gift of God to him in his free-will; he is left at liberty however to use this gift, or not to use it; God does not compel any one, for if he compelled we should no longer be men, but mere machines, or stocks, or stones; he therefore gives man water to wash in, he gives him power to wash, and to **COMPEL HIMSELF** to wash, (for man may, consistently with freedom, **COMPEL HIMSELF**, though he cannot be compelled by another); he also calls upon him, and encourages him to wash, and points out to him the dreadful consequences of not washing; but still he does not force man to the water, nor force the exertion of his free power; this is
for

for man to do as of himself, but at the same time in dependance on the Lord, and confessing all his power to be of the Lord; and man does this, when he believes in the Word of God, when he learns it, when he digests it well, when he looks to God in it and through it; but especially when he discovers and puts away from him the evil of his doings; when he CEASES TO DO EVIL, AND LEARNS TO DO WELL; when he labours to renounce the sin and vanity and defilement of self-love, the love of the world and the flesh; when he calls these things infernal, and makes them abominable in himself; finally, when departing from all iniquity, it is the great concern of his heart, and labour of his life to become perfect in the love of God and his neighbour, and to bring forth the blessed fruits thereof in all the good works of a holy and religious life.

When man acts thus, then he acts in conformity to God and his law; then he uses and improves aright the talents which God has given him; then he reconciles the APPARENT contradiction of freedom on the part of the creature, and omnipotent operation on the part of the Creator; then, in the language of the apostle, he WORKS OUT HIS OWN SALVATION, and yet is enabled to confess, that "it is God who worketh in him both to will
"and to do of his good pleasure;* he compels himself,

* Philip 11, 12, 13.

self, and yet feels himself free; he purifies himself, and yet confesses in all humiliation that he is purified of God; he wills, he thinks, he practises what is good, in perfect liberty as of himself, and yet in so doing he takes no glory or merit to himself, because he acknowledges that all his power to do so is from heaven; then in short he both glorifies God, and works out his own purification and salvation; he glorifies God, not by his indolence, not by his inaction, not by hanging down his hands and doing nothing, as some vainly imagine they may glorify God; but by a faithful and diligent use of the grace and power which God continually gives him, ascribing all the merit and glory thereof unto God; and he works out his own purification and salvation, by cleansing himself from the defilements of evil, by loving the Lord Jesus Christ above all things, and his neighbour as himself, and by living a life according to such love, in all freedom, and with all delight, knowing that the Lord giveth him such freedom and such delight as his eternal recompence, rest, and heavenly blessedness.

See here then, beloved, plainly pointed out the means and methods of spiritual washing or purification! It is not of God ALONE, nor of man ALONE, to put away the sins and defilements of man; it is not by a life of piety ALONE, nor of FAITH ALONE, nor of moral virtue ALONE, nor
of

of the deepest speculations even in Divine things, nor of the highest intellectual attainments ALONE, that the spirit of man is made clean from its natural impurities, and rendered acceptable to God; but this blessed end of spiritual cleansing is accomplished, just in proportion as man learns the Word and will of God, and examines himself thereby, and renounces in himself whatever is opposite to the love of God and his neighbour, and lives a new life of charity and faith according to God's commandments. When man liveth thus, looking unto the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and acknowledging his holy grace and power herein, then he is in a state of daily purification from sin; then he enters into a nearer and closer conjunction with God and heaven; he is formed daily more and more perfectly, both in the inner and outer man, according to all the laws of heavenly order; he breathes daily a purer spirit of heaven-born charity, mercy, meekness, patience, and every other christian virtue, whereby he is delivered daily from his own natural and contrary spirit of uncharitableness, unmercifulness, pride, impatience, and every other anti-christian vice; thus renouncing every thing that is evil, and willing, thinking and doing every thing that is just and good, in freedom as of himself, and yet in humiliation and submission as under divine influence, he experienceth a daily removal of sin and defilement,

ment, and a daily growth and establishment in the pure virtues and graces of heaven, through the omnipotent working of the Lord of heaven, who puts away all evil in man, just so far as man concurs with him, by diligently searching out and humbly confessing what is evil in himself, with a desire to have it put away.

To conclude—It now only remains that we apply faithfully and sincerely to the above means and methods of spiritual purification, and then we cannot fail of advancing daily in the great and blessed work, and thereby finally attaining peace to our souls. For this purpose suffer me now, with all possible earnestness, as in the presence of God, before whom both you and I must shortly give account of the use of our talents, to press upon you the diligent application of these means and methods. Believe first in the Word of God; believe it to contain LIVING WATER from the great fountain Jesus Christ, the manifested Jehovah; look therefore to this REDEEMING GOD in it; imagine that you see him ever sitting at this WELL OF LIFE, and offering to you daily this living water for spiritual washing: believe next that you have free power to wash yourselves in this water, or not to wash; believe that this power also is from Jesus Christ, and is his continual gift to you for salvation; that he leaves you FREE nevertheless to use it, or not to use it; believe however that he great-

ly

ly desires you to use it, because out of his infinite love to you, he greatly longs and labours for your purification and salvation: lastly believe, that it is your part to go to the water, and use the power of washing which the Lord giveth you; do not therefore idly stand still, and hang down your hands, and say, I cannot wash myself, do thou Lord wash me; for then the Lord will assuredly say to you words to this effect; “ why canst not
 “ thou wash thyself thou idle servant? have not I
 “ given thee water to wash in, and power also to
 “ go to the water and wash? and wilt thou say
 “ thou canst not go? Canst thou not read and
 “ learn my word? Canst thou not examine thine
 “ heart and life thereby? Canst thou not discover
 “ evil in thine heart and life, and when thou hast
 “ discovered it, canst thou not confess it, and
 “ abominate it, and forsake it, imploring my grace
 “ and mercy to preserve thee from it? Canst not
 “ thou cease to do evil and learn to do well, ac-
 “ cording to my commandments? Canst thou not
 “ think humbly of thyself, and exalt me in my
 “ pure spirit of love and charity, and thus love
 “ thy fellow creatures, and delight in doing them
 “ service? Canst thou not lastly believe, that in
 “ so doing thou wilt enjoy eternal blessed conjunc-
 “ tion with me, and I with thee, and thus wilt
 “ live in a state of daily purification from sin, and
 “ finally attain eternal peace, and come to dwell
 “ with

“ with me in my kingdom ? How sayest thou then,
“ thou canst not wash ? whereas thou oughtest
“ rather to have said, Lord, I will humbly do as
“ thou commandest me, and I will believe that
“ if I use my best endeavours to put away evil
“ from my heart and life, thou wilt then be with
“ me, and help me, and bless me in so doing, and
“ make my ONE TALENT TEN TALENTS.”

Oh terrible words of most awful, but just reproof, to all such idle and unprofitable servants, as expect to be made clean by the mercy of the Lord, without ever examining their own hearts and lives concerning evil, and using their best endeavours, in dependance on the Lord, to put it away and to lead a new life of faith and charity, according to the commandments !

May we all, beloved, escape this terrible reproof ! For this purpose, may we use freely, faithfully and humbly the power which our merciful God daily gives us for spiritual purification ! May we work together with our God in the great work of cleansing our hearts and lives from all our natural defilements, and becoming pure through the holy influences of heaven-born truth and charity ! Thus shall we never hear from our God the words of severe rebuke, but shall finally be found in the number of those blessed ones of whom it is written,

“ These

Serm. XIII. PURIFICATION. 145

" These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."*
AMEN.

* Rev. vii. 14. 16

P

SERMON

S E R M O N XIV.

ISAIAH i. Part of 16th Verse.

Wash ye, make you clean.

HAVING endeavoured, in the preceeding discourses, to point out the NECESSITY, NATURE, and manner of spiritual washing, or purification, I shall now proceed to the fourth thing which I purposed to consider, viz. THE REASONS WHY THE GENERALITY OF CHRISTIANS MAKE SUCH SMALL ADVANCES IN, AND EXPERIENCE SO LITTLE OF THE POWER AND COMFORTS ARISING FROM THIS WORK.

Let me first request of you, beloved, not to think the suggestion harsh and unjust, that the generality of christians are faulty in a matter of such importance. Daily experience, alas! does but too much justify the observation. The decay of solid piety, the overflowings of ungodliness, the general inattention to things of a serious concern, give every thinking mind too many occasions of melancholy apprehension in this matter. Nay, who

who amongst us can say, that he does not add something to the general guilt and blameableness? Who can say he hath made his heart and life so clean and pure in the sight of God, as he might have done? Who can say that he hath made the most of that TALENT which the Lord hath entrusted to him, and that it was not possible to have improved it further? Let us not therefore endeavour to make ourselves blameless herein, but let us rather in humiliation and contrition all of us acknowledge our unprofitableness: let us in this spirit seriously consider and examine the reasons why we have not profited more than we have done; we may then hope for the divine grace to lead us to amendment in future; and our merciful Lord will assuredly be with us, and bless us, whilst he sees us thus earnest and anxious in discovering the causes of past negligence, and in making better improvement of future opportunities.

Hoping and praying earnestly for an increase of such a spirit amongst us, I shall now proceed to the consideration proposed.

Now the reason why the generality of christians make such small advances in, and experience so little of the power and comforts arising from spiritual purification, though they be many in NAME, yet in EFFECT they are but ONE, and they may all therefore be concluded in ONE, VIZ. this,

A NEGLIGENCE IN THE STIRRING UP AND
RIGHTLY EXERCISING THE GRACE AND POWER
OF GOD IMPLANTED IN OUR FREE-WILL.

I shall endeavour to unfold this reason to you
more particularly, by considering it in regard to
two sorts of persons, first, in regard to the UN-
CONVERTED AND IMPENITENT; second, in
regard to the PENITENT AND CONVERTED.

And first, it is but too plain, that amongst those
who call themselves Christians, there are many
who live in an IMPENITENT UNCONVERTED state
of heart and life, by which I would be understood
to mean, whose hearts and lives have never under-
gone any change; whose love and affections are
merely natural, that is, selfish, worldly, and car-
nal; who do not know, and are not willing to
know what spiritual and heavenly love is, which
is love towards God and our neighbour; who
have often heard of the name of Jesus Christ, and
say they believe in him, but who in the mean time
are altogether unacquainted with the power,
grace and life of Jesus Christ in their own souls;
who live therefore in the utmost contrariety and
opposition to the gospel, being the servants of sin,
the friends of the world, lovers of themselves;
having never separated between the good and the
evil, the clean and the unclean, in their own
hearts and affections, though possibly their out-
ward

ward life before man may appear pure and holy.

It is too plain, I say, that there are many such characters amongst those who call themselves Christians. But what now shall we say is the reason why so many remain in such an unpurified state? Why has not the grace and the gospel of Christ more effect upon them? How comes it to pass that their hearts are so senseless, that the things of this world make so much impression, that the things of another world make so little? They surely might have become great faints; they might have been the holy and happy children of God; they might have advanced in the blessed paths of purification and regeneration as well as others; they might have advanced in the blessed paths of the kingdom of heaven with the blessed prophets, apostles, martyrs and saints of old; whence then is it (the question demands our most serious attention) whence, I say, is it that there are any, who are thus the enemies of their own everlasting peace and blessedness?

Awful and interesting as this question is, there can no one satisfactory answer be given to it, but what was just now suggested as the great cause of men's abiding in spiritual impurity, viz. A NEGLIGENCE IN THE STIRRING UP AND RIGHTLY EXERCISING THE GRACE AND POWER OF GOD IMPLANTED IN THEIR FREE-WILL.

Let

Let us consider and understand this well. It is the voice of scripture, and it is the voice of reason; it is the voice of every thing both within us and without us, that every man has power from God, if he will seek it, to work out his purification, and thereby his salvation. This power resides in every man's free-will; and accordingly every one of us may find we possess it, inasmuch as we have free power all of us to think about God, or not to think about him; we can confine our thoughts to this world, or we can raise them to another; we can meditate upon what is good, or we can meditate upon what is evil, upon what is temporal and what is eternal. But this is not all; we have power also over our affections by virtue of this infinite grace and power which our God continually giveth us; thus we can not only THINK upon God, but if we were so disposed, we can CHOOSE God, we can make God a DELIGHT to us; we can LOVE him with all our heart, and soul, and strength, we can LOVE also the things of his law and kingdom; we can make these things dearer and more precious to us than all the things of this world and the flesh; thus we can set God above all things in our hearts, and thereby, if we would, we can put all things below God; we can make ourselves humble and wise; we can make the things of this world and the flesh submit to the things of another world and the spirit: thus we
can

can advance in spiritual purification, which consists, we shewed, in separating between what is of God and what is not of God, that so the law of the love of God may have full dominion, and restore all things to order, harmony and peace in us.

Behold here then the one true and only reason why the UNCONVERTED and IMPENITENT remain in such their UNPURIFIED state! they do not with their free-will, and by virtue of the power of God therein, choose God as their greatest and only true good; they suffer their affections to lie buried in the things of time and sense, in mere vanities and temporal delights of this world and the flesh, when they might raise and exalt them upwards, to apprehend, and love, and delight in, and possess the things of eternity, the never ceasing blessedness, the genuine unspeakable peace and delights flowing from the unutterable mercy and love of the great father of being. The fault therefore lieth solely with themselves; God is the same infinite good, ever present, ever pressing to be received by them, but they will not stir up their desires to taste and apprehend his goodness; to see how much better he is than all other things to them; and this is the reason why they live in sin and impurity.

But it is not only the IMPENITENT and UNCONVERTED, who thus do themselves injury, and suffer mischief by retarding their purification. The

PENITENT and the CONVERTED also, in many cases, are unfaithful in this respect, and through NEGLIGENCE IN STIRRING UP AND RIGHTLY EXERCISING THE GRACE AND POWER OF GOD IMPLANTED IN THEIR FREE-WILL, they frequently FALL SHORT of that purification to which they might have attained.

Let me here, beloved, entreat the particular attention of all such amongst you, as have ever experienced in yourselves any work of repentance and conversion to God and his kingdom.

Purification, we have already shewn, is a gradual progressive work; it is not effected under first conversion, or by the first acts of repentance towards God; but it is effected by successive processes of an obedient life, in which there is a continual putting off of evil, or what is of the old corrupt man, and a continual putting on of good, which is a continual growth and formation in the principles of that new and spiritual life of love and charity, of order, harmony, and peace; of justice, judgment, and uprightness; of temperance, soberness, and well doing, that is from Jesus Christ.

Too many, it is to be feared, have suffered mischief in their spiritual state, from wrong and false notions on this subject. Thus some have supposed themselves made perfectly clean and pure in God's sight, under their first conversion and first acts of repent-

repentance; hence they have fallen into carelessness, sloth, and inattention in regard to further progress: the consequence has often been, that the desire of the will has been captivated again by those evils which seemed to have been forsaken and dead, but from which the soul was never radically purged; the love of God, which had been chosen as the greatest good, hereby becomes languid; the things of this world and the flesh get fresh power and ascendancy; and ~~thus~~ the great work of purification is oft times retarded, if not totally checked.

And what reason now shall we assign for this unhappy declination from the good way and work which had been begun? There can be no just cause assigned but that above mentioned, viz. A NEGLIGENCE IN STIRRING UP AND RIGHTLY EXERCISING THE GRACE AND POWER OF GOD IMPLANTED IN THE FREE-WILL; for as the unconverted and impenitent, through this negligence, never attain to any knowledge and love of God, even so through a like negligence, the converted and penitent often fall short of that measure of divine knowledge and love, to which they might have attained. Few amongst us alas! are free from fault in this respect; few are careful and watchful on all occasions to CHERISH the grace and love of God; to keep the heavenly flame ever burning bright: to have OUR LOINS GIRDED AND
OUR

OUR LAMPS BURNING; to maintain in the soul a constant elevation above the lesser things of time and sense; to observe all the approaches and encroachments of evil; to renounce and make them abominable when observed; at the same time to prepare for the better receiving the approaches and influences of God and his goodness; to let these influences have their full and perfect formation in the life, by a dutiful submission to their guidance and government in all the relative duties of our several stations; thus to grow daily more and more in a divine image and likeness; and to advance daily to greater degrees of purity, power, and peace in the heavenly life and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

And yet, beloved, we must all of us be forced to confess that we have power to do all this, even a divine power, Omnipotence itself, if we would but look for and exert it. We must all be forced to confess, that we might become daily more and more pure; we might attain daily a nearer place to the throne of Jesus Christ; we might experience daily a further separation from the powers of sin and darkness; we might be renewed daily in a more glorious and perfect image of the divine love, order, harmony, and beauty, and bring forth purer and more plentiful fruits thereof in the works of our callings here below;

we

we might in short be daily fitted for higher degrees of bliss in the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Oh then, let us take these things into serious consideration, as things of the most awful importance to us; let us search out, let us consider well, let us use aright the great power of God in our free-will; let us ponder well on this his inestimable gift, this heavenly talent committed to us, that so we may know and discern its high value, and that its price is above worlds; let us take heed of hiding it in a NAPKIN, or in the earth, like the unprofitable servant in the gospel, when we ought to be trading with it, when we should be making it fruitful to us in the BANK or treasure-house of the divine riches.

And are there any here present, of that unhappy number above described, who have never used this talent of God in the way of repentance and conversion? but who are still abusing it in the ways of sin and folly? Oh, be advised in time; convert yourselves unto your God; obey the pressing calls of his mercy in your free-will; make a surrender of yourselves to him, join your wills with his will in sincere prayer for amendment of life, for departure from evil, for purification and renovation in the spirit of your God; feel thus after the unspeakable blessing of the divine love in your hearts, and never rest till you are made sensible that it is the greatest possible blessing you
can

can ever find; and then doubt not, but it will sooner or later be made manifest to you.

And for you, beloved, who in the ways of repentance and conversion, have already tasted of this supreme blessedness, let me counsel you also to stir up further the grace and power of God that is in you, in order that you may taste it the more fully. Take heed how you suffer the work of purification to be retarded by fancying it to be already compleated: having been made sensible of the vanity of all things compared with the riches of the divine mercy, suffer not your minds to be taken captive again by that vanity: rather labour for further purification and separation from all uncleanness of the old man, and for a further more intimate admission into the kingdom of the eternal purity and peace: for this purpose stir up your wills to feel after and apprehend more and more of the divine mercy, by frequent prayer, by serious meditation, by reading often the Word of God, but especially by sincere examination of the ends, purposes and thoughts of your hearts, and actions of your lives, touching the love of God and of your neighbour. These things if ye will observe and do, ye will be preserved from the great danger and mischief of retarding your purification, and becoming daily more and more clean from all sin and defilement of iniquity, through deep humiliation and submission of yourselves before

fore God, attended with the full and free exertion of all powers and principles both of soul and body at the same time, ye will daily see and enjoy more and more of his blessed presence, and kingdom, and power, and glory, in your hearts and lives, being daily rendered purer forms for the reception thereof.

And O merciful Jesus, who art THE FOUNTAIN OPENED FOR SIN AND UNCLEANNESS,* give us thy sinful people, we beseech thee, right apprehensions of the necessity, nature, and manner of that spiritual purification, which thou camest to call us to, and to accomplish in us. For this purpose, convince us of our natural impurities and defilements through sin; and may this conviction lead us to seek earnestly to thee and to thy Word, as the only source of purity! Convince us further, that we have all of us FREE power to go to thee and to thy word, and to purify ourselves thereby, and that this power is thy continual gift to us in our free-will; and may this conviction lead us to acknowledge the inestimable value of this thy gift, and so to use it, that it may become fruitful and multiply in us, being neither rejected by our obstinacy, nor rendered barren by our indolence, nor defiled by our iniquities, nor perverted by the forward exertions of our own spirits! Teach us thus, O merciful Lord, the high and heavenly

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wisdom

* Zech. xiii. 1.

wisdom of co-operating aright with thee in the great work of our purification, by submitting all our own exertions and operations to thine, and exercising them in conformity to the eternal laws of truth and order which thou hast appointed; that we may put our whole trust in thee, yet not so as to become careless and presumptive; that we may be active to cleanse ourselves, but not in self-activity; that we may purify ourselves, yet acknowledge all our purity to be continually from thee; that we may operate in freedom as of ourselves, yet in the deepest humility confessing and exalting in all things thine holy operation. So may we hope finally to become clean from sin, whilst we thus earnestly take part with thee against our own evils; and as we become clean from sin, we know that we shall be renewed and regenerated, through thy mercy, in righteousness, which is the spirit of pure love and charity, the essential life of heaven, the source of unutterable peace, the perfection of purity, in which and by which we shall have admission into thy presence, and be made one with thee, and rejoice in thy kingdom, and praise thy holy name for ever and ever. AMEN.

THE
NATURE, OPERATION, AND EFFECT

OF THE

DIVINE LEAVEN,

Opened and Explained.

SERMON XV.

MATT. XIII. 33.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Leaven, which a Woman took and hid in three Measurs of Meal, till the Whole was leavened.

OUR blessed Lord in this parable describes the effect, which his doctrines, if rightly received, would have upon the lives and actions of mankind. By THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is here meant, as in other passages of holy scripture, the manifestation or opening of the heavenly kingdom,

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power,

power, and virtue of the divine love and wisdom in the hearts of true believers. By THE THREE MEASURES OF MEAL are meant the three constituent parts of man, the will, the understanding, and the actions. By THE WOMAN, WHO TOOK AND HID LEAVEN THEREIN, is meant the church, or society of the faithful, who receive with holy affection the doctrines of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and treasure them up in their minds. By THE WHOLE BEING LEAVENED is meant the blessed effect of those doctrines upon the whole man, that is, upon the will, the understanding, and the actions, and how each of these measures is pervaded by the divine leaven, and partaketh of the blessedness of its heavenly and leavening properties.

According to the sense of the parable thus explained, it must be matter of infinite concern to all Christians to give it due and serious attention. It is proposed therefore in the following discourse, in order to excite such attention, and lead to a profitable understanding of the words of the parable, to consider them under a more particular view, and thereby point out more clearly and fully the propriety of our Lord's similitude, when he said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," &c.

Now the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven in two respects,

1st. By

1st. By reason of the fermentation which it causeth in the leavened body; and

2dly. As it altereth the nature and quality of that body.

1st. Then, let us consider the justness and propriety of our Lord's similitude in regard to the fermentation occasioned in a leavened body.

Did you never observe the effects of leaven, when it is mixed with an unleavened body, how it causes an immediate fermentation; and how all the parts of that body are, in consequence thereof, put into a strange commotion and strife, which never cease till the leaven hath finished its operation, and reduced the whole mass to a leavened state?

Even so it is in the believing soul, when the kingdom of the pure love and wisdom, grace and truth of Jesus Christ enters into it by means of a true conversion on the soul's part to receive it. There is caused an immediate spiritual fermentation, in consequence whereof all the powers and affections of the soul are put into a strange unusual commotion and strife, which perturbation never entirely ceaseth, until the heavenly leaven hath done its perfect work, and reduced the whole lump of corrupt nature to its proper leavened state in the holy love and truth of the great Redeemer.

Much is said in holy scripture concerning this spiritual fermentation, its nature, its effects, its blessed-

blessedness, and the necessity thereof in order to the soul's advancement in purification from evil, and regeneration of heart and life. It is expressed under a variety of names, all denoting the same divine and profitable operation. Sometimes it is called mourning, sometimes temptation, sometimes spiritual conflict or warfare, sometimes tribulation and sorrow for sin, all which words serve to denote one and the same thing, viz. the fermenting effect of the holy leaven of the kingdom and grace of Jesus Christ on its first introduction into, and future operation upon, a sinful soul.

The ground and reason of this spiritual fermentation arises from the contrariety that subsists between the soul in its fallen or natural state, and the divine leaven received by it on its conversion to the kingdom of God. "The flesh (it is written) lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other."* The effect of this contrariety is, that they mutually oppose each other, and it is this opposition, or strife for pre-eminence, which causeth that perturbation, commotion, warfare, or temptation in the soul, which may very properly be termed spiritual fermentation, and which is felt more or less in the minds and consciences of all, who become converts to the gospel of Jesus Christ,

* Gal. 4. 17.

Christ, and are obedient to the holy influences of his grace and love in labouring after the perfect reformation and regeneration.

If our religion indeed consisteth in mere external form, and goeth no further than to give us an outward decency of manners and behaviour in the sight of men, we shall then be entire strangers to what is here meant by spiritual FERMENTATION, as arising from the commotion and strife occasioned in the soul by the admission of the heavenly leaven of the divine love and wisdom. And the reason is plain; because in such a case our religion is the garb merely of the outward man; it is grounded in the power and authority of men only; it partaketh not of that divine power which was manifested to destroy the works of the kingdom of darkness and the devil, and to renew the sinful soul in an heavenly image through an entire purification and regeneration; the consequence is, that under the influence of such an earth-born piety, we make no opposition to sin, or the evil unregenerate nature, called in scripture the OLD MAN, and of course experience no trial, no trouble, no fermentation arising from the admission of the heavenly leaven. But if we be real seekers of the kingdom of God and his righteousness in our own souls; if our religion has begun to lead us to look through all outward forms and ceremonies unto the real inward life and POWER OF GODLI-

NESS; if we do not rest merely in an external decency of manners before men, but are labouring after purity of heart and life before the Lord, through a real and vital communication of his divine love, and grace, and truth, in our inner man; if this, I say, be our religion (and surely nothing short of this can be called true religion) then we must needs have felt something of this spiritual fermentation; and that, because it is written, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten;"* and again, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy;"† and again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."‡

Let none however be afraid, or discouraged, whensoever they perceive these painful effects of the divine leaven; rather let those be afraid and discouraged who never have perceived them, inasmuch as it is written, "Tremble ye women that are at ease;"§ and again, "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion;"|| and again, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity, therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed."¶ But on the other hand, let the troubled and sorrowful soul, which by

* Rev. iii. 19.

† John xvi. 20.

‡ John xvi. 33.

§ Isaiah xxxii. 11.

|| Amos vi. 1.

¶ Jer. xlviii. 11.

by reason of sin is made sensible of suffering, through the admission of that leaven which is manifested to purge from all iniquity, take refuge and comfort in these words of the Eternal Truth speaking thus unto it, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;"* and again, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;"† and again, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;"‡ and again, "Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones; and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."§

But secondly, Having thus considered how the kingdom of heaven is LIKE UNTO LEAVEN on account of it's fermenting property, let us now proceed to consider, as was proposed, in what sense it is said to be like unto leaven, as to the alteration which it effecteth in the leavened body.

We find by experience that leaven, when it is united with a substance to be leavened, diffuseth
itself

* Matt. v. 4.

† James i. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

§ Isaiah liv. 11, 12, 13.

itself presently through the whole mass of that substance, communicating thereto its leavening qualities, so that there is no part of the leavened body, but what partaketh more or less of the leavening virtue, and acquireth thereby a nature and quality totally different from what it had in its unleavened state.

This change is most observable and extraordinary. The very constitution and properties of the leavened body are perceptibly altered; the substance is no longer what it was before it received the leavening tincture; different forms, different properties, a totally new modification of being appears; and the beholder is surprized at the strange and sudden effect of the leavening body in destroying qualities which did exist, and giving birth to such as before had no existence in the body leavened.

Admired then and adored be the propriety of our Lord's similitude in the text, as observable in this instance; for thus also it is with respect to the kingdom of heaven, or the manifestation and opening of the heavenly kingdom, power, and glory of the divine love and wisdom of Jesus Christ, in the soul of the true believer.

When this holy leaven entereth into the soul by virtue of a true conversion on the part of the believer, it presently altereth the whole nature and quality of that soul. It diffuseth itself through
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all the various affections, parts, and powers thereof. It communicateth its heavenly leavening properties to the whole mass of corrupt nature; so that there is no part of the whole man which doth not partake more or less of the divine leavening virtue, and acquireth thereby a quality totally different from what it had in its unleavened state.

May every one, who wisheth to understand and profit by the words of the eternal wisdom, ponder well this weighty truth!

Before the heavenly kingdom of the love and wisdom, grace and truth of Jesus Christ entereth into our souls, by virtue of a true conversion on our parts to receive it, we are full of sin and all uncleanness; leavened only with the "old leaven of malice and wickedness.* Our hearts are the habitations of all vile unclean affections; "the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.† We are all gone out of the way, we are altogether become abominable; there is none that doeth good, no not one: "Our throat is an open sepulchre; with our tongues do we deceive; the poison of asps is under our lips; our mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; our feet are swift to shed blood; "Destruction and unhappiness is in our ways, "and the way of peace have we not known; "there is no fear of God before our eyes.‡

Thus

* 1 Cor. v. 8. † Rev. xviii. 8

‡ Psalm xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Thus are we described by the Word of truth, and that this is a just picture experience also beareth witness; for in the unconverted and unleavened soul, who doth not see that pride, and malice, and envy, and wrath, and self-love, and the love of the world and of the flesh have the dominion, and triumph over righteousness, and peace, and truth, over the love of God and the love of our neighbour, in which love consisteth the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven?

But how now is our miserable case altered, when by virtue of a sincere repentance and true conversion unto Jesus Christ, we begin to receive the heavenly leaven of his holy love and wisdom, grace and truth, in our souls! This leaven soon disperleth itself through the whole lump. The whole frame and constitution of our beings are made sensible of its divine efficacy, and experience the salutary influences of its leavening properties. Hatred, envy, pride, covetousness, self-love, the love of the world and of the flesh, with all the catalogue of vile affections and corrupt lusts, all that are called the OLD LEAVEN, are subdued by the heavenly virtue of that NEW LEAVEN which the Lord of life and love infuseth into our hearts. For now, behold, we are made the children of meekness, of humility, of patience, of forbearance, of contentedness, and of all holy and heavenly graces. By virtue of the NEW LEAVEN, whereof

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we are partakers, we are enabled to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. In this love we live, in this is our delight, and we learn to bring forth the fruits thereof in all dutiful obedience and well-doing, knowing that herein consisteth the peace, rest, and blessedness of the heavenly kingdom; herein we find eternal life, a redemption and deliverance from all sin and the powers of darkness, and a joyful resurrection to the glories of a new birth in and by the power and spirit of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus through a participation of the heavenly leaven, do we experience the truth of that scripture where it is written, "If any man be in Christ" "he is a new creature; old things are passed away;" "behold all things are become new;" for in this our leavened state, through a reception of the gospel covenant, our whole natures acquire a new, that is, an heavenly tincture and quality; the kingdom of heaven entereth into us, and by its powerful and sacred operation, we are renewed in its heavenly image, temper, and spirit, who were heretofore fashioned only according to the earthly image, temper, and spirit of this world and the flesh.

But this change, effected in the soul by the leaven of the heavenly kingdom, will appear more clearly, if we consider it in respect to the THREE

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MEASURES spoken of by our Lord, viz. the will, the understanding, and actions; and

First, In respect to the will.

Before the heavenly leaven of the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ entereth into and influenceth the human will, it is in a state of the most grievous sin, disorder, and misery.

It is in a state of sin, because it is in a state of contrariety and opposition to God; it willeth not what God willeth, it loveth not what God loveth, neither doth it delight in what God delighteth; it willeth only what is agreeable to its own evil concupiscencies; it loveth itself, the world, and the flesh, better than the things of God and his kingdom; its own evil affections are its law, which it obeyeth more than the law of God; its chief delight is in the things of sense, or in the indulgence of its own selfish, vain, and earthly lusts; these constitute its first and sovereign bliss, whilst the things of God are considered with a secondary and inferior regard in the scale of happiness; and thus it is in a state of sin, because in whatever soul the love of God and the things of his kingdom, his righteousness, his peace, his joy, have not the pre-eminence, and entire dominion, there sin and wickedness of every sort and degree must of necessity reign and have possession.

Need we add, that in this case the human will must be full of disorder and misery? of disorder,

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as being destitute of all divine government, obeying only the impulses of its own blind and corrupt passions; and of misery, inasmuch as living separate from God, it must of consequence be separated from all solid rest and peace, whatsoever appearances of a temporary happiness it may seem to have found in the perishable objects of sense and of this lower world.

But behold now the effects of the heavenly leaven entering into and operating in this sinful, disordered, and miserable will!

All is then presently restored to holiness, order, and happiness. When Jesus Christ entereth and taketh possession of the humble soul; he manifesteth the chief blessedness and power of his operation in first reforming and renewing the WILL. He teacheth man to will what he willeth, to love what he loveth, to delight in what he delighteth. He putteth down the empire of the selfish, worldly, and carnal lusts, and establisheth in the place thereof the kingdom of all holy, heavenly, and pure affections. Thus he restoreth the human will to holiness, order, and happiness, by removing the sinful lusts, which are the sole cause of all disorder and misery, and introducing in their stead the pure desires, the heavenly influences, the meek, peaceable, and innocent affections of love, mercy and charity, which are the distinguishing characters of his regenerate children, and which

form the kingdom of heaven, of order, and of blessedness, in whatever soul they are made manifest.

But secondly, The heavenly leaven of the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ doth not abide in the will only, but communicateth its leavening properties to the understanding also.

Nothing can be conceived more dark and blind than the understanding of man is, in its natural state, in regard to God and the things of his kingdom; it seeth only the outside appearances of the things of this world; it is wise only in respect to temporal wisdom, such as relateth to temporal things and the objects of sense; in the mean time it seeth nothing of spiritual and eternal objects; there is a thick vail of darkness drawn between it and the concerns of another world; nevertheless it can sometimes talk and reason about another world, about God, and heaven, and immortality, as if it had a clear discernment of the nature of such subjects; and hence it can APPEAR as wise, or perhaps wiser, than those who are truly enlightened with a divine and clear light, but still it is totally in the dark as to the truth and reality of such things; it talketh and reasoneth about them only like a person who hath heard some accounts of a distant country, which yet he never saw, or as one born blind would talk and reason about the light and colours of the objects of this world.

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Here then, let us learn again to adore the heavenly properties of that holy LEAVEN, which, when it entereth the human will, doth presently communicate its enlightening virtues to the understanding.

No sooner do the pure love and wisdom of Jesus Christ enter into the soul, but they by degrees open the spiritual eyes of the mind, which had before been blind and dark. The same miracle is now performed, but in a much higher sort and degree, which the blessed Redeemer once performed upon the poor blind people in the land of Judea. By virtue of his Almighty touch, the scales of spiritual darkness fall off from the clouded sight, and the light of heaven and eternity is by degrees let in upon the mind. The understanding is enabled hereby to see things according to their truth and reality; it doth not remain only in the outside appearances of objects, but it entereth into their natures and essences. It unites time with eternity, earth with heaven, matter with spirit, body with soul, all things with God, and beholdeth them in their several relations to the great parent from whom they come forth into being. It no longer therefore regardeth itself as a short-lived creature of this world only, but it seeth itself in its holy connection with Jesus Christ, as an inhabitant of another world, as an associate with blessed angels, as a child of God begotten again
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unto a rich inheritance in eternity, and training up in this lower sphere of nature, to be fitted and prepared for the glories of an endless kingdom. By the light of the Word of Jesus Christ it seeth light, according as it is written, "In thy light shall we see light;"* and again, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."† In this light, therefore, of the eternal truth and word of Jesus Christ, the mind of the true believer seeth, and by it he continually walketh, and he is thereby enabled to discern the spiritual things, and laws and manners of God's kingdom, and to distinguish the way that leadeth thereto, and to press forward in that way, whilst he beholdeth the glory of God going before him.

Thus doth the holy leaven of the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ operate in the understanding, making it wise unto salvation and the things of God, delivering it from the blindness of its own native corruptions, and by the radiance of celestial light, enlightening it to see the things which belong to its eternal peace, and enabling it to walk forward in a straight and direct path to the gates of the NEW JERUSALEM.

But lastly. The leaven of the heavenly kingdom, in the soul of the true believer, doth not abide

* Psalm xxxvi. 9.

† John viii. 12.

abide only in the will and the understanding, but it descendeth still lower, and communicateth its holy virtues to the outward words and actions.

Words and actions do always proceed from some internal ground, and are always of a nature and quality similar to that ground from whence they proceed. In the unconverted and unleavened soul, they are full of sin and vanity, because they proceed only from a sinful and vain love, such as self-love, or the love of the world, but in the truly converted and leavened soul, they are full of righteousness and importance, because they proceed from, and have their ground in the holy love and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

Let us take this great truth into serious consideration. Without good words and good works, none can be declared regenerate and accepted of God, because these are the fruits whereby alone it can be known that the tree is good; for until the will and the understanding are thus brought into their outward birth or manifestation, they are mere visionary, unknown, unformed, and unfixed things, without body, substance, or reality, the consequence whereof is, that they presently vanish and are dispersed; but being brought into word and work, they thereby acquire a body and form, and are rendered known, durable, and substantial.

Here however let it be well observed, that we
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cannot possibly speak a good word, or do a good work, but by virtue of the holy love and wisdom of Jesus Christ influencing us therein, according to the declaration of our Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing;"* but if that holy love and wisdom have duly leavened our wills and understandings, then all our words and actions will by degrees partake thereof. I say by DEGREES, because it will require a further process in the operation of the holy leaven, to take thus an entire possession of the OUTWARD man, that so the WHOLE LUMP MAY BE LEAVENED. This operation too will be attended with trial and difficulty, inasmuch as the words and works having their birth in the grosser and lower organs of the corporeal frame, it will require a more especial watchfulness, and more diligent labour on our parts, to make those grosser and lower organs submissive to, and receptive of, the divine influence.

Let none however be discouraged herein. Let him only labour to be obedient to the leaven of the divine grace and holy love, in his will and his understanding, and he will soon find it operative in his words and actions, AND MIGHTY IN ITS WORKING TO SUBDUCE ALL THINGS UNTO ITSELF. Vain words and unprofitable, hypocritical, and meritorious works will be put far away from him.

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* John xv. 5.

He will have A WATCH BEFORE THE DOOR OF HIS LIPS, and he will be made ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. The heavenly leaven will descend in proportion to his obedience, as "he cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God;"* and in proportion to the descent of the holy leaven his words and works will be sanctified; his love and understanding will be rendered active, diligent, and fruitful; and their activity, diligence, and fruitfulness, will be altogether different from that of the natural man, being purified from the defilements of a selfish, vain, and worldly love, through a pure regard to the glory of Jesus Christ, and under the influence of his holy love, mercy, and charity.

Thus is the true believer, by the reception of the heavenly leaven, purged and sanctified both within and without; WITHIN, in regard to his will and understanding, and WITHOUT, in regard to his words and actions; whereby he beareth experimental witness to the truth of the Lord's declaration in the text, that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in THREE measures of meal, TILL THE WHOLE WAS LEAVENED."

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* John iii. 21.

Brethren, may the whole be leavened in each amongst us! May we at least, through divine grace, be all turned to look in godly sincerity for the whole to be leavened! May we be enabled by a sincere repentance, conversion, and obedience to Jesus Christ and his gospel, to bear a faithful testimony in our hearts and lives to the heavenly purifying virtues of the leaven of that kingdom, which is not "meat and drink, but righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost!" May we thus learn and be convinced, that "the kingdom of God is nigh unto us,[†] and that it is a kingdom which consisteth "not in word,"[‡] only, or the formalities of a dead letter, and barren speculation of unpractised opinions, but IN POWER, even the power to make us THE SONS OF GOD by its regenerating influences, and to change us into NEW CREATURES, and to rank us amongst those blessed ones that "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."[§]

Without some communication of this blessed leaven, and experience of its salutary operation, there is no such thing, believe me, to be found, as either holiness, order, peace, or salvation. We shall

* Rom. xiv. 17.

† 1 Cor. iv. 20.

‡ Luke x. 21.

§ John i. 13.

shall spend our lives on that which doth not profit, in the misery of blindness, folly, and delusion. The world will but deceive us with shadows and phantoms of happiness; our own evil lusts will promise us peace, but in the end they will disappoint and destroy us; our religion itself, without this leaven, will be totally vain and unprofitable, deluding us with fancies and forms of righteousness and peace, but destitute of the power and reality thereof.

It is in Jesus Christ our adorable God and Saviour, and the leaven of his holy love and wisdom, that we can alone hope to find true holiness, order, happiness, and salvation. Let us bid adieu then to the regions of disorder, of delusion and disappointment; let us turn, whilst we may, to that Lord, who is ever calling and pressing us to come unto the bosom of his unutterable mercy, and to be partakers of its divine and leavening virtues; let us open our hearts to the reception of the heavenly leaven; let us suffer it to lie hid in us till the whole be leavened, till it hath penetrated and purified our wills, our understandings, our words and works, and communicated thereto its heavenly and blessed tincture. This is the one only work of which we shall never have occasion to repent; for it is a work which will stand in the judgment, and endure
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the fire, and escape the condemnation, daily delivering us from sin, folly, and misery, by opening our souls and bodies to the nearer and more blessed influences of the mercy and peace and comfort of Jesus Christ. To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

BROTHERLY LOVE

CONSIDERED AS THE

SIGN AND PROOF

OF THE

CHRISTIAN'S GROWTH IN DIVINE GRACE.

IN THREE SERMONS.

SERMON XVI.

1 John iii. 14.

We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.

IT was the blessed privilege of the beloved apostle and his fellow-believers, to have this happy testimony in their own minds, that they were PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE. They KNEW this to be the case by a conviction wrought within themselves; they had an indisputable SIGN
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and PROOF of it which they could not question ; they were persuaded hereby that their lot would be eternally happy ; that they were restored to the favour of God ; that they were ONE WITH GOD AND GOD WITH THEM ; of consequence, that death, misery, and condemnation were no longer to be dreaded by them, because they were PASSED far away from such things, and born into another kingdom. Thus their souls were kept in peace through all the troubles and disquietudes of this lower world, and having hope in God, and being at rest in him, they REJOICED WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY.

Let it not however be supposed, that these blessed privileges were intended to be confined to St. John and the first disciples of christianity. They belong alike to all those who profess the same holy religion and obey its heavenly doctrines. They belong therefore to us, to you and to me, and to every true believer in Jesus Christ ; and it is a grace granted to every one of us, if we are wise enough to discover it, to be enabled to say, " We know that we have passed from death unto " life."

That this is the case, will appear plain from the consideration of these two particulars, to which I could earnestly wish to engage your present most serious attention.

First.

First. The nature of the PASSAGE here spoken of by the apostle FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE;

Secondly. The sign or proof of our having made this passage, viz. BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN.

First, then let us consider the nature of the passage spoken of by the apostle FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

It is a matter little thought of by the generality of christians, that there is such a PASSAGE FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE; and still less is it considered that this PASSAGE is to be made by us in this world, otherwise it never can be made; and least of all is it in general apprehended, how the thoughtless and impenitent never discover this PASSAGE, but abide in the regions of DEATH, whilst the penitent and sincere believer, he both discovers the PASSAGE, and walks therein, until he arrives at the regions of ETERNAL LIFE and peace.

The generality of christians therefore think of no other death but the death of the body, and of no other passage to life but the passage through the grave of the body; and thus, alas! too many, it is to be feared, neglect to look for that passage till it is too late to find it, and never PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, because being blinded by the delusions of sin, they did not believe such a thing possible or attainable here below.

But, beloved, that there is a passage FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, is plain from the concurrent testimony of the Word of God throughout: and that this passage is such, as that we may both discover it, and may make it, during our abode in this world, is equally plain from the declaration of the apostle in my text, speaking of himself and of other believers, "We know that we have passed " from death unto life."

From this declaration it is manifest, not only that there is a passage from DEATH UNTO LIFE, but that men like ourselves also had made the passage, and KNEW that they had made it, even during their abode in this world.

To the same purpose, but in different words, the apostle Paul bears this testimony, "Giving thanks to the father, which hath made us meet " to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints " in light; who hath delivered us from the power " of darkness, and hath translated us into the " kingdom of his dear son."*

Here St. Paul speaks, both in his own name, and in that of his fellow-christians, of a " deliverance " from the power of darkness, and a translation " into the kingdom of Jesus Christ," which they had experienced, even whilst they were living in the

* Colos. i. 12, 13.

the body here below ; which is the same thing as what St. John calls the “ passing from death unto “ life.”

The first christians, therefore, it is most manifest, not only KNEW and were assured that there was a passage FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, even to be found in this world, but they also discovered this passage, and made it, during their abode here below, and were moreover assured, to their unspeakable comfort, and by the most incontrovertible signs and proofs, that they had made this passage.

And yet these were men like unto ourselves; they were subject to the same infirmities, they had the same corruptions to struggle with, were exposed to like temptations with ourselves; neither had they any other or higher helps than we christians have at this day. The Almighty did not favour them more than he doth us; his grace was not stronger or more powerful in their bosoms than we might find it to be in ours; heaven was not nearer or more open to them than it is to us; and yet, we find they were enabled to attain unto this most happy of all human conditions, to KNOW that they were PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

What I would therefore here contend for, and wish to press upon your present most earnest consideration

sideration, is this, that what those first christians once attained to, is still attainable by us, if we will but be as faithful to our God and his Word, and as true to our own best interests, as they were. We may therefore PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, even during our abode in this world, as certainly and fully, as ever St. John, St. Paul, or any other of our Lord's first disciples did. We may have the same signs and infallible proofs, which they had, that we are so PASSED. We may thus attain, if we be so disposed, unto the same grounds of heavenly hope, assurance, and comfort in our acceptance with God.

For the religion of the blessed Jesus, let it be well noted, is the same religion at this day, that it was seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago. The minds of men, as to their belief in it, and their reception of it, may indeed be changed, but itself cannot change. Its doctrines are still the same, and will remain so to eternity. Its power upon the human soul, if it be rightly received, is also still the same. It is capable therefore of effecting now what it effected in OLD TIME. It can still open heaven to the true believer; it can still transform man from earthly to heavenly; it can still DELIVER FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND TRANSLATE US INTO THE KINGDOM of its divine Author: it can, in short, still enable us to say, if

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we are not wanting to ourselves, what was said to their unspeakable bliss by them of old time, "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

I am well aware, however, that this will hardly be believed by the carnal and the careless. All such are unwilling to allow that the powers of heaven are so near them; or that as much fruit of those powers will be expected from them, as from the saints of old. Thus they set limits to the operations of God, which God himself hath not set, and which he hath declared he never will set. They say, for instance, "Apostles might look for extraordinary advancements in divine grace; they might overcome the world and the flesh; they might become the sons of God; they might, by the purity of their lives, and the power of their faith, PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE; but this is not to be expected in OUR DAYS; it was never intended we should experience such influences of divine grace, or bring forth such fruits thereof in our hearts and lives."

Thus do the carnal and the careless labour to reason themselves out of the real excellency of their religion and all its benefits, by supposing those benefits to be confined to those few who first received the gospel of Christ. But, beloved, permit me, by way of conclusion to this part of my

my present subject, to caution you most earnestly against suffering your minds to be betrayed into such unworthy, false and dangerous sentiments of your religion and its divine author. For this purpose ponder well with yourselves the genuine design of the gospel of Christ, and the UNCHANGEABLENESS thereof. Its intention is, and needs must be the same NOW, that it was at its FIRST preaching and establishment. The powers and privileges which it presents to the true believer are also the same. As therefore it formerly operated on the minds of apostles, confessors, martyrs, and thousands of other holy disciples, to convert them to Jesus Christ, to turn them from sin and vanity, to transform them from earthly to heavenly, to purify, change, redeem, and renew their sinful natures, and thus to make them PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, even so also it would operate at this day, if men's minds were but in a like state to admit and comply with its operation.

Believe then this to be the real truth, and that of consequence you are now called, and every believer in the gospel is called, to experience the same blessed effects from it that the apostles themselves experienced. I do not say that you are to look for the gift of working miracles as they did, nor to go about the world to convert it by your preaching like St. Peter or St. Paul, but this you
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are certainly to look for, viz. to believe in and to love Jesus Christ, the incarnate God and Saviour, as they believed in and loved him; and in this belief and love to love your brethren as St. Peter and St. Paul loved their brethren; and thus to be meek, humble, patient, contented, and charitable as you read the Lord's first disciples were; and to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, as they did; and hereby to PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE. For search and consult your own minds, and see whether you can discover there any reason why you should be less holy than St. John, or any other of the Lord's first disciples were. Is it not in your power to love God and your neighbour as they did? Cannot you repent and believe in Jesus Christ as well as them? Cannot you therefore grow alike in the divine grace, and attain unto a like measure of true christian virtues? Make but the experiment, and make it with sincerity, and believe me, or rather believe God, you will soon be fully convinced, that the measure of holiness to which the saints of old were called and attained, is the very same to which you also are called and MAY attain.

Away then with all vain reasonings. Repent and believe the gospel. Turn unto Jesus Christ the manifested Jehovah, and keep his commandments; and you will then soon experience that
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heaven is still open. God is still near and powerful, and his grace still operative as in old time; whereby you will sooner or later be enabled to your unspeakable bliss to say with the apostle, "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

S E R M O N XVII.

1 John iii. 14.

We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.

IN the foregoing discourse we endeavoured to point out the nature of the passage FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE here spoken of, as being a passage to be performed during our abode in this world, and to which all christians are alike called universally.

We shall now proceed further to shew the nature of this PASSAGE, and then consider the SIGN OR PROOF here mentioned by the apostle of our having made this passage, viz. BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN.

It must be very plain to every considerate person, that by PASSING FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE is not meant any BODILY passage, or any change of place or situation with respect to the BODY.

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For if the BODY was to move ever so far in any direction, upwards or downwards, it would not be possible for us to depart further from DEATH, or to approach nearer unto LIFE than we were before.

The case is, the terms LIFE and DEATH, as used in holy scripture, are applied to denote, not any particular state of the BODY, but particular states of the SOUL or SPIRIT, with respect to God and the things of his eternal kingdom.

According to this application of the terms LIFE and DEATH, to PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, denotes a change wrought in the internal state of the SOUL or SPIRIT, so that whereas it before lived in a state of spiritual DEATH, it now begins to live in a state of spiritual LIFE.

As for example. It is written in holy scripture, "man doth not LIVE by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."* And in another place "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:"† By which words we are plainly taught this truth, that NOT to partake of the WORD OF THE LORD, or NOT to keep his COMMANDMENTS, is a state of spiritual DEATH; but on the contrary, that to partake of the WORD OF THE LORD, or to keep his commandments, is a state

* Deut. viii. 3. Matt. iv. 4. Luke iv. 4. † Matt. xix. 17.

state of spiritual LIFE. Whensoever then the soul or spirit of man, which heretofore had no knowledge and love of the Lord and of his WORD, begins now to perceive an inward sense of love and regard thereto, and takes delight in the ways of God, and the KEEPING OF HIS COMMANDMENTS, such a soul or spirit is said to PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

So again. The apostle speaks of being "dead in trespasses and sins.*" To live therefore in TRESPASSES AND SINS against God is a state of spiritual DEATH; of consequence to cease from TRESPASSES AND SINS, and to begin to lead a NEW life is a state of spiritual LIFE; and this change wrought in the soul from a state of TRESPASSES AND SINS to a contrary state of purity and holiness is therefore a PASSING FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

So again. "She that liveth in pleasure (saith the apostle) "is dead whilst she liveth;"† that is, the soul or spirit, which indulgeth in the mere pleasures of the carnal, worldly, and sensual life, and knoweth no better and higher enjoyments than these, is in a state of DEATH; to come out of this state then, so as to begin to be made sensible of other and superior pleasures to those of flesh and blood, viz. the eternal pleasures of righteousness,

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* Ephes. ii. 1.

† 1 Tim. 5, 6.

which flow from the knowledge and love of God, this is to begin truly TO LIVE; and the change wrought hereby in the state of the soul or spirit, is a real PASSAGE FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

To mention one other instance, which may serve to set this matter in a still clearer light. When the repenting prodigal returns unto his father, we are informed of the glad and welcome reception which his father gives him, how he ordered the FATTED CALF to be killed, saying, LET US EAT AND BE MERRY; for which he gives this very extraordinary reason, "This my son was dead" and is alive again.* Here every enlightened person may see plainly what is meant in holy scripture by being DEAD and being ALIVE, or by DEATH and LIFE. When the prodigal had no regard to his father, or his father's house, and felt no desire of returning thereto, "but was wasting" his substance in riotous living," he is then said to be DEAD, though he was living at the same time in all the gratifications and enjoyments of riot and luxury, of this world and the flesh: but as soon as ever he is weary of these wretched satisfactions, and begins to feel a warmth of penitent affection kindled towards his father, with desire to return to him and to his house, he is then said to be ALIVE,

* Luke xv. 24. 32

ALIVE, though at the same time he ceased to live to his former bodily and carnal enjoyments.

Here then, if we be so disposed, we may all see clearly what is meant in holy scripture by DEATH and LIFE, and by PASSING from the one to the other. DEATH is to live without God and his Word, or, what is the same thing, to have no love towards God, and no delight in him and in his commandments. LIFE on the contrary is to live with God, and to partake of his Word, that is, to have love towards God, and to find delight to our souls in the way of his commandments. To PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE then, in this particular instance, is to come out of a state of NO love towards God, and NO delight in his Word, into a state wherein we both love and delight in God, and in the purities of his Word and commandment.

Again. DEATH is a state of wilful sin and impenitence; LIFE therefore is a state of repentance or ceasing from sin. DEATH again is a state of false pleasures and satisfactions, such as are those of this world and the flesh, when separated from the pleasures of righteousness. LIFE therefore on the other hand is a state of REAL pleasures and satisfactions, such as are those arising from the love of God. In these instances therefore to PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE is to pass through repentance from the vain and false gratifications of

the corrupt part of our natures, which is carnal and worldly-minded, to be made sensible within ourselves of the pure and eternal delights flowing from the love of God, and the communications of his peace to our minds and consciences.

And would we know, beloved, the real, deep and scriptural ground of all this, it is as follows. There is but one true and real LIFE, and one true and real fountain of LIFE, and that is God, and his Word and kingdom. Whatever then is not connected with God, his Word, and kingdom, this, in the language of holy scripture, is said to be DEAD, or in a state of DEATH. Devils therefore, or infernal spirits, though living in a state of most exquisite feeling and sensibility, are still said to be DEAD, and to dwell in the regions of DEATH; the reason is, because by love they have no conjunction with God, his Word, and kingdom from whence alone life cometh. In like manner impenitent and ungodly men are said to be DEAD, and to dwell in the regions of THE SHADOW OF DEATH, though possibly they may be living at the same time in the highest state of worldly gratification and fleshly sensibilities, and the reason is the same, viz. because by the impenitence and impurity of their lives, they separate themselves from conjunction with God and his life. We talk indeed of other LIFE besides the life which is of God, and of other DEATH besides that

that which consists in separation of the love from God. Thus we talk of the LIFE of vegetables, and of the LIFE of animals, which are incapable of loving God, and being thus conjoined with him. We say also of men that they are LIVING, or ALIVE, when we see them alive and active in the love and pursuit of the things of this world, animated with the prospects of ambition, gain, glory, or sensuality. We say also of the same men that they are DEAD, when we see them cease to live in the body, notwithstanding their beginning to live instantly in another world, in a state of feeling and perception far superior to what they experienced here below. It is however well to be attended to, that though in common language we apply the terms of LIFE and DEATH in these subordinate and lower senses, yet, as used in holy scripture, they have a higher and infinitely more important signification. What man therefore frequently calls LIFE, God calls DEATH, and what man calls DEATH, God on the contrary calls LIFE. The reason is, God calls nothing LIFE and allows nothing to be ALIVE, but what is connected with himself, the only LIFE, by a living principle of love and understanding; and therefore in his sight, and according to his language, the mere natural, animal, or unregenerate life of man, let its feelings, perceptions, and delights seem ever so exquisite, is but DEATH, or the shadow and image
of

of true LIFE, as having no conjunction by love and wisdom with the eternal and only source of the true LIFE, according as it is written, "To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life."[†]

The continual call of God therefore unto man, in his Word, is to come and enter by repentance, by faith and obedience, or, in other words, with his life's love, and understanding, and operation, into conjunction with himself the FOUNTAIN of LIFE, that so he may live for ever; this conjunction alone being true LIFE, and worthy of the name. In his natural state, we know, man has no such conjunction, for in his natural state, by reason of hereditary and actual evil, he has no true love towards God, but loves himself and the world better than God and his neighbour. In his natural state therefore he is DEAD, or in a state of DEATH, from which state he cannot possibly be delivered but by returning to God, and entering into conjunction with him, through his Word or commandment.

Nevertheless, though man be by nature in a state of DEATH, yet it is his own fault if he continues therein, and absolutely DIES for ever. For God giveth every one of us power to come out of this DEATH and enter into the regions of LIFE, in-asmuch

[†] Rom. viii. 6.

asmuch as he giveth every one of us power to know and to love Him, and to know, and love and practise his Word, and thus to re-enter into conjunction with him, which is ETERNAL LIFE.

For let us search now, and examine ourselves whether we have not all of us this power from God in our inner man, and we shall assuredly find that we have it. For cannot we think of God, if we be so disposed, as often as we please? Cannot we think of sin that it is opposite to God, and therefore separates us from God? Cannot we think of holiness, that is from God and agreeable to God, and therefore unites us with God? Cannot we therefore say thus to ourselves, I will hate and renounce sin, because it separates me from God, and I will love and practise holiness, because it joins me with God? And cannot we thus assure ourselves, that as we depart from sin and enter into conjunction with God, we shall PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE? Only let us be at the pains to examine ourselves, and make the experiment, and we shall certainly find that we are in possession of the blessed power and privilege here described.

I should now proceed to consider the sign and proof given in the words of my text, of our having PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, VIZ. BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN, but the present time will only permit me to conclude what has

has been already said, with this brief but affectionate expostulation:

Are we, beloved, of the happy number of those who have made the passage FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, or are we still walking in the VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH? Let us examine ourselves well in this important matter. Are we returned unto God? Do we begin to find a love towards God, and a real delight of heart in him and his ways? Are we for this purpose turned, or in the desire to turn, from all known evils, because they are opposite to God? Do we cease to delight in the sin and vanity of this world and the flesh; and do we consider well, that they who live in the fond indulgence of mere carnal and earthly pleasures, are DEAD WHILST THEY LIVE? Is it thus become the chief affection, satisfaction and endeavour of our lives to enter into conjunction with God, his Word, and kingdom, by well-doing, that so we may LIVE for ever? Some such few questions as these, seriously proposed, and sincerely answered, will soon bring us acquainted with the state of our souls, how far we are PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

And blessed shall he be who upon such an examination shall find, that he is not still abiding in the regions of death and misery. Blessed shall he be whose conscience bears him testimony that he hath begun to love his God and Redeemer, and to
delight.

delight in the paths of life and righteousness. He is on the highway which leadeth to the New Jerusalem. He hath departed from the City of Destruction, and is about to enter into the City of the Lord of hosts. Mount Zion is directly before his face, and though his body be here upon earth amongst men, yet his spirit is travelling in the midst of angels to take possession of the promised inheritance, the land of everlasting life, which is the blessed portion of all those that fear God and keep his commandments. AMEN.

S E R-

S E R M O N XVIII.

1 John iii. 14.

We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.

HAVING already endeavoured to shew. in the two foregoing discourses, what is here implied and to be understood by PASSING FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, I shall now proceed, as was proposed, to consider lastly the SIGN OR PROOF here mentioned, of our having made this passage, viz. BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN.

This SIGN OR PROOF however cannot possibly be understood, until it be first known who are here meant by those whom the apostle calls THE BRETHREN. May I therefore bespeak your serious attention to this previous consideration, from which it will plainly appear what is implied and understood by LOVING THE BRETHREN.

Now

Now the apostles and first Christians, we know, called all those THE BRETHREN, OR THE BROTHERHOOD, who were united together in one common faith and love, that is, in faith and love towards their common God and Saviour Jesus Christ, operating in newness of life according to his commandments.

Wherever they saw this operative faith and love, there they acknowledged A BROTHER, and they respected, revered, honoured, loved and cherished him, as one begotten again of the same heavenly parent with themselves, and making one of that great and holy family, body, or kingdom, whose head is the great Redeemer, the manifested God, the Lord Jesus Christ; herein following the spirit and example of their divine master, who had taught them, "my mother and my brethren" "are they, who hear the Word of God, and "do it."*

It was not therefore any outward condition or circumstances, with regard to this world, which determined this BROTHERHOOD. Rank and riches were no qualifications to be admitted into the holy FRATERNITY; neither did poverty and meanness of birth exclude any. The single question respecting any one was this, doth he believe in

* Luke viii. 21. See also Matt. xiii. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50. and Mark iii. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

in Jesus Christ, the God who hath lately appeared amongst us to take away our sins? and doth he manifest his faith by love, or by a life according to the commandments of this God? If so, he is A BROTHER, be he rich or poor, be his birth honourable or dishonourable in the eyes of men.

And as the conditions of men, with regard to their outward worldly circumstances, was of no account in forming this BROTHERHOOD amongst the first Christians, so neither was the love, which influenced the members of this BROTHERHOOD, grounded in, or determined by, any mere natural affections, such as arise from natural relationships, friendships, and partial worldly attachments one towards another.

There is a principle, we know, which often is called love, and passes for Christian love and charity amongst men, which has no higher source, no deeper ground, than that of mere animal instinct, or natural similitude, or worldly associations, for the sake of worldly interests, comfort or convenience.

This however was not the principle which operated to produce BROTHERLY LOVE amongst the Apostles and first Christians. These holy persons were wrought upon by higher and more heavenly motives herein, than any which arise from mere worldly connections or relationships of flesh and blood. In this respect was verified what is written
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of them, that they were "born not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" Their attachment therefore towards each other was a divine and holy attachment. It had its ground and source in the great Father of all spirits. It was an holy principle of heaven-born charity, which being eternal and stable as its origin, was not subject to those variations, changes, and caprices, which ever accompany mere human and natural affections, let them be ever so near and tender.

We are not however to suppose, that this love and attachment of the first Christians towards each other was merely spiritual, unattended with work and operation, which is the fruit of charity; for it was a principal lesson of their love, "not to love in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth."† They revered each other therefore as children of heaven and immortality; but this was not all; from this reverence they were led to exercise every outward act of benevolence one towards another; their lives were continually employed in doing good, and it was their supreme joy and delight to be serviceable in the smallest respect to any, who bore the stamp and image of the God whom they worshipped.

From this short view then of what the Apostles and first Christians understood by THE BRETHREN

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* John i. 13.

† 1 John iii. 18.

OF BROTHERHOOD, and of the nature and operation of their love towards the BRETHREN, it will now plainly appear to every considerate person what is meant and implied by this sign or proof of passing from death unto life, viz. BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN.

TO LOVE THE BRETHREN, is to love THAT in others which is of God, that is, the divine image and likeness, or in other words, all those living and heavenly graces, virtues, and excellencies, which proceed from a sound and pure faith and love towards the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. But this is not all—TO LOVE THE BRETHREN further implies that our love becomes operative in GOOD WORKS, or in producing its proper outward fruits; it implies therefore an external life of active benevolence, corresponding with that internal and heavenly principle from which it proceeds. He who LOVES THE BRETHREN, therefore, not only reveres the divine image and likeness in his fellow-creatures, but labours also continually to cherish, comfort, strengthen, and bring it forth in all, according to his utmost ability and the best talents which God has given him.

Let me bespeak, beloved, your most particular and earnest attention to this mark and character of a true Christian, or of one who hath PASSED FROM

DEATH

DEATH UNTO LIFE, that so you may examine by it the state of your hearts and lives.

There is nothing we are so apt to deceive ourselves in, if we are not well upon our guard, and well enlightened with the genuine light of truth, as LOVE TOWARDS THE BRETHREN, often calling that BROTHERLY LOVE, which is no such thing, but which is possibly the very reverse, whereby we do essential mischief to our eternal interests.

Thus for example; the mere natural man sometimes fancies that he has BROTHERLY LOVE, because he has much NATURAL TENDERNESS AND AFFECTION towards some particular persons, to whom he is united by particular natural ties; either of blood, of friendship, or of worldly interest.

But such NATURAL AFFECTION, it is well to be observed, is a thing totally distinct from what is called in the scriptures BROTHERLY LOVE or charity; and therefore we frequently find that very wicked persons have as much, or possibly more, of such NATURAL AFFECTION, than real regenerate Christians, according to those words of our Lord, "sinners also love those that love them, and sinners also do good to those that do good to them."*

NATURAL AFFECTION therefore is a principle totally distinct from the affection of gospel charity,

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or

* Luke vi. 32, 33.

OF BROTHERLY LOVE. For NATURAL AFFECTION is a mere animal instinct, common alike to the just and to the unjust, to them that ARE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, and to them who know nothing of such a passage; yea, NATURAL AFFECTION is even common to man with the beasts that perish, for we find that the beasts, even those which are most fierce and savage, are attached by strong NATURAL SYMPATHIES towards their young and towards one another. Do not however misunderstand me, as if I here meant to censure or debase the principle of NATURAL AFFECTION, SYMPATHY, AND TENDERNESS, whether amongst men or amongst beasts. This is far from my design and meaning. Such principles and affections have their uses in their proper times and places, and when kept in due order of subordination to higher affections and principles. All I wish here to observe, and to lead you to observe, is this, that NATURAL AFFECTION IS NOT GOSPEL CHARITY; NATURAL TENDERNESS IS NOT BROTHERLY LOVE; NATURAL FEELING AND SYMPATHY IS NOT SPIRITUAL GRACE AND EVANGELICAL VIRTUE; and that of consequence, before we can attain to that measure of Christian purity and perfection implied by LOVING THE BRETHREN, we must attain to some higher and more heavenly principle than that of mere NATURAL

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AFFECTION, TENDERNESS, FEELING, AND SYMPATHY.

But methinks I hear you ask, What then is this higher and more heavenly principle, which is distinct from mere NATURAL AFFECTION? It has been already shown, in what was observed concerning the first Christians. It is to regard THAT in others which is BORN OF GOD, and to call THAT a BROTHER. It is to regard therefore in one another THE DIVINE IMAGE and LIKENESS, and to love and cherish it accordingly. It is to be determined in our likings and dislikings, our affections and disaffections, no longer by mere natural or temporal principles, such as are those of the flesh and of this world, but by spiritual and eternal principles, such as regard the family, body, and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Behold here the great mark of distinction between the love which influences the mere NATURAL MAN, and that which influences the real and HEAVEN-BORN CHRISTIAN! The mere NATURAL MAN loves according to blind and partial instinct. The Christian loves according to an enlightened and universal principle of charity. The mere NATURAL MAN calls him BROTHER, to whom he is attached by blood, by natural friendship, or by interest. The Christian calls him BROTHER, to whom he is attached by spiritual bonds of faith
and

and love in the same God and Redeemer. What the NATURAL MAN therefore loves in another is somewhat merely of the flesh, or of this world. What the Christian loves in another is somewhat of the spirit, and of another world. The NATURAL MAN loves the outward person or personal qualities of another. The Christian loves the inward spirit, or spiritual qualities, that is the DIVINE IMAGE AND LIKENESS. Thus the love of the NATURAL MAN is grounded in mere nature, and has no higher origin and end. But the love of the true Christian ascends high above nature; its source is from heaven and the God of heaven; and its end, like its origin, is eternal, being rooted in the eternal principles of justice and judgment, of order and uprightness, of sincerity and truth, which constitute the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, and being active, operative and fruitful in good works according to such principles.

To conclude. Let me earnestly recommend to you, beloved, to try and prove your Christian faith, and the ground of your Christian hopes, and whether you are PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, by the marks and characters of BROTHERLY LOVE as above described.

This is a sure test which will not deceive you, and without this there is no other test on which you

you may safely depend. It is not, you may be well aware, a mere NOMINAL FAITH or profession; it is not because you belong to this or that body of Christians, as distinguished from others by a name or a form; it is not because you have much warmth of natural affection, tenderness, and attachment towards particular persons; still less is it, because you have a natural zeal for HOLY THINGS, and can put up holy prayers to God WITH YOUR LIPS, and can TALK LEARNEDLY about God and the things of his kingdom; it is not, I say, for any, or for all of these things, that you can hope for acceptance in God's sight; for all these qualifications may be the qualifications of very wicked persons, who have no part in the holy family, brotherhood and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and therefore are not PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

There is then but this one single qualification, which can be a safe and solid ground of your hope and trust, viz. BROTHERLY LOVE. But be sure examine yourselves well concerning this qualification, and take heed that you be not deceived respecting it. Mark especially the distinction above pointed out between mere NATURAL AFFECTION and GOSPEL CHARITY. NATURAL AFFECTION is of itself a mere DEAD thing before God, and receives all its TRUE LIFE from CHARITY. Howbeit

beit charity, or brotherly love does not destroy NATURAL AFFECTION; it only quickens, sanctifies it, and makes it eternal; it also renders its operation more regular, constant, and orderly. Ask yourselves therefore over and over some such questions as these, What is it that I love in another? Is it the DIVINE IMAGE AND LIKENESS, or is it only something of nature? Do I love my neighbour, not because he is rich, not because he is learned, not because he is esteemed and honourable in the eyes of men, not because he is agreeable to my own natural temper and complexion, and still less because he is united to me by the bonds of blood and relationship? but do I love him because he loves God; because I see in him a Godlike spirit and temper; because he is humble, just, sincere, upright, faithful, fearful of offending God, and seeking to attain unto a Godlike nature? Do I therefore regard chiefly and principally in my fellow-creatures the DIVINE IMAGE AND LIKENESS; and is it become the continual labour and delight of my life, and of all my actions, to administer in some way or other, according to my talents, to the bringing forth, perfecting, comforting, and cherishing such DIVINE IMAGE AND LIKENESS?

And inasmuch as I cannot love what is of God, unless I be of God myself; inasmuch as I cannot have any respect for GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS in

Serm. XVIII. BROTHERLY LOVE. 213

in another, until I myself am formed into his IMAGE AND LIKENESS, is it lastly become my daily labour and endeavour to be made a child of God myself, that so I may the better love his children as my brethren?

Some such few questions as these, seriously proposed and answered, would soon enable us to determine our state of advancement in the divine favour, and how far we were PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE. May we all then, through the divine grace and mercy, be led to this serious examination of our hearts and lives, that so we may all attain unto the unspeakable comfort of knowing that we are indeed PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE!

THE word God (said he) is upon me; because the
under the gospel dispensation, in the spirit of the
life which was sown in place with these believers
the blessings of that renewed or regenerate state of
I wish them the greatest amongst the believers
in these words and those which are connected
" Lord "

THE TRUE GROUND AND NATURE

OF

SPIRITUAL BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY

CONSIDERED AND EXPLAINED

IN TWO SERMONS.

SERMON XIX.

Isaiah lxi. 3.

To give unto them Beauty for Ashes.

IN these words, and those which are connected with them, the prophet manifestly describes the blessings of that renewed or regenerate state of life, which was to take place with true believers under the gospel dispensation. "The spirit of the Lord God (saith he) is upon me; because the
" Lord

“ Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings
 “ unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the
 “ broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the cap-
 “ tives, and the opening of the prison to them
 “ that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year
 “ of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our
 “ God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint
 “ unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto
 “ them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourn-
 “ ing, the garment of praise for the spirit of hea-
 “ viness.”

All these expressions, I say, have a manifest reference to that blessed change which was to take place in the spirits of men by regeneration, under the appearing of the great God the Redeemer, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel of his grace and kingdom, and they do all and each of them deserve our most serious consideration.

At present, however, I wish to confine your attention more particularly to the blessing expressed in the words of my text, “ To give unto them beauty for ashes;” from which words I propose to show these two things,

First, That the state of the natural or unregenerate life of man is a state of the utmost DEFORMITY; and

Secondly, That the state of the spiritual or regenerate life of man is a state of the most exquisite and perfect BEAUTY.

And

And First, That the state of the natural or unregenerate life of man is a state of the utmost DEFORMITY.

This is a matter little considered by the generality of Christians, and therefore what I am about to say on the subject may possibly seem strange to many; nevertheless it is a subject of the utmost importance, and therefore demands all our consideration, if we wish truly to know ourselves, that is, the real internal state and form of our spirits.

Few people attend to, so as to understand and comprehend aright this truth, that their spirits have a FORM as well as their BODIES. with this only difference, that the FORM of the spirit is spiritual, whereas the FORM of the body is material; fewer still are duly AFFECTED by this truth, so as to be influenced by it as to their lives and conversations; and fewest of all have discernment to know what the FORM of their spirits is, whether it be DEFORMED OR BEAUTIFUL.

We all of us see the FORM of our bodies, what that is; and too many, alas! confine their sight to their bodies, and do not look to or believe in any other FORM within themselves; whereas, if they looked into and believed the holy scriptures, they would know and see, that within the body there is a spirit, and that this spirit is what properly constitutes themselves; and that this spirit also has its FORM, and consequently that such as the

FORM

FORM of their spirit is, such in reality is their proper FORM.

They would also, in such case, be enabled to see further, that the INTERNAL FORM of their spirits must be according to their lives, DEFORMED and UGLY, if the life be disorderly, but BEAUTIFUL and GRACEFUL, if the life be according to truth and order.

Now the natural or unregenerate life of man is, we all know, in a state of disorder; for man by nature, before he becomes regenerate, loves this world and the flesh more than God and his neighbour, and has more delight in the things of this world and the flesh, than in the things of God and his kingdom, being proud and vain, covetous and carnal, malicious and envious, and thus altogether opposite to the humble and charitable spirit of Jesus Christ and his Word.

Hence the spirit of man, in such his natural or unregenerate state, is in a state of DEFORMITY, for deformity properly considered is nothing else but the form or manifested image of disorder, and wheresoever we see any thing DEFORMED, there we may be sure we behold a manifestation of DISORDER.

This may appear plain from what is observable in outward nature, as in animals and plants; some we see are beautiful and others ugly, each having a FORM according to its LIFE, so that from know-

ing the life we may know the FORM, as on the other hand, from knowing the FORM we may become acquainted with the LIFE.

For be at the pains to ask yourselves, Why is a lamb, a dove, or a rose beautiful? and you will not be able to give any other answer, but because they are the representative forms of that beautiful spirit or life from which they spring.

Ask yourselves again, Why is a wolf, a bat, or a thistle ugly? and the answer here must of necessity be the same, because they are the representative forms in outward nature of a disorderly, monstrous, and ugly life.

But this will appear still plainer from the express letter of holy scripture.

Our Lord, we know, was enabled to see through the outsides of men and things into their internal forms, for "he knew, or saw, what was in man,"* as it is written of him. Accordingly he calls men and things by names agreeable to their internal or spiritual FORMS. Thus the impenitent and unbelieving Jews he calls "a generation of vipers,"† the subtle and deceitful Herod he calls a fox;‡ the wicked and malicious he calls wolves;§ and so in divers parts of holy scripture we find the evil dispositions of the natural or unregenerate man

* John ii. 23.

† See Matt. xii. 34. Chap. xxiii. 33.

‡ See Luke xiii. 32.

§ See Matt. vii. 15. Chap. x. 16. Luke x. 3.

man marked and described to us by sundry unclean and deformed animals, such as serpents, dragons, owls, bats, and the like.

Hence then we may see clearly, if we be so disposed, that the FORM of the unregenerate life or spirit of man is a monstrous and ugly FORM; the reason is, because it proceeds from a monstrous, ugly, and disorderly spirit and life, such as pride and vanity, malice and hatred, worldly love and carnal concupiscence, contempt of others in comparison with himself, inordinate affection, and many other evil lusts and tempers, contrary to the love of God, and to mutual or neighbourly love.

Could the natural or unregenerate man therefore see his REAL SELF; could he look through his body to behold the FORM of his spirit; he would see himself the most dreadful DEFORMITY; he would behold a monstrous and ugly image, which would terrify and affright him; in every evil affection and thought would be presented to his view a serpent, a wolf, a bear, or a fox, according to its nature; he would see himself as thus described by the prophet, "The cormorant and the
" bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the
" raven shall dwell in it; thorns shall come up in
" her palaces, nettles and brambles in the
" tresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation for
" dragons, and a court for owls; the wild beasts

ing the life we may know the FORM, as on the other hand, from knowing the FORM we may become acquainted with the LIFE.

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" bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the
" raven shall dwell in it; thorns shall come up in
" her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation for
" dragons, and a court for owls; the wild beasts

“ of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts
 “ of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fel-
 “ low ;” * yea, there are no figures of creatures in
 outward creation, which can enough express the
 terrific FORM of man's interiors in their unregene-
 rate state.

Thus then it is that the natural or unregenerate
 life of man is a life of the utmost DEFORMITY. I
 shall now proceed to shew, as was secondly pro-
 posed, how the spiritual or regenerate life is a life
 of the most exquisite and perfect BEAUTY.

It was a maxim of ancient wisdom, that if
 TRUTH OR VIRTUE were made visible in an out-
 ward FORM, it would be a FORM surpassing all
 others for its incomparable BEAUTY.

The ancients herein testified their deep and in-
 terior wisdom, discerning that whatever was of
 heavenly original must needs have an heavenly
 BEAUTY, and that as all real truth and virtue was
 derived from heaven, and had its birth therein, it
 must needs be proportionably BEAUTIFUL and ex-
 cellent in its FORM.

But the holy scriptures of truth have put this
 matter out of all doubt, and left us to wander no
 longer in the uncertainty of vain conjecture.

We there learn that as God is the most pure
 and perfect good, and also the most pure and per-

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* Isaiah xxxiv. 13, 14.

fect truth, so he is also the most pure and perfect BEAUTY, and all other things and creatures are BEAUTIFUL only so far as they are his images and likenesses, and partake of his life and spirit.

Thus it is written, "How great is his goodness, and how great is his BEAUTY!"* and again, "Strength and BEAUTY are in his sanctuary;"† and again, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beauty and glory."‡ Accordingly, we are commanded "to worship the Lord in the BEAUTY of holiness;§" and therefore the psalmist exclaims in the warmth of his devotion, "One thing have I desired of the Lord which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the FAIR BEAUTY of the Lord;"|| and to the same purpose it is written in another place, "Let the BEAUTY of the Lord our God be upon us;"¶ and as an encouragement to seek the Lord, it is promised by the prophet to the true believer, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his BEAUTY."‡

And as the Lord himself is thus declared in holy scripture to be the sum and perfection of BEAUTY, so his church, or they who receive his life and spirit, and are thereby made his images and likenesses,

* Ezek. ix. 17. † Psalm xcvi. 6. ‡ Isaiah iv.

§ Psalm xxix. 2, xcvi. 9. || Psalm xxvii. 4. ¶ Psalm xxxiii. 17.

nesses, are declared to be proportionably beautiful.

Thus it is written again, "Hearken, oh daughter, and consider, incline thine ear, forget also thine own people and thy father's house, so shall the king have pleasure in thy BEAUTY;"* whereby daughter is manifestly meant the Lord's church in general, and every one who is a member thereof in particular. Again, "Out of Zion, (that is the true Church) the perfection of beauty hath God shined."† And again, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, Oh Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, oh Jerusalem."‡ And again, speaking of the church represented by Jerusalem, the prophet saith, "Thou wast exceeding beautiful, and didst prosper into a kingdom, and thy renown went forth among the heathens for thy beauty."§ To the same purpose, speaking of those who are not of the church, that is, who do not receive the Lord's life and spirit, and become his images and likenesses, it is written, "Thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as a moth fretting a garment."|| Again, Their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre out of their dwelling."¶ And again,

* Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

† Psalm l. 2.

‡ Isaiah lli. 1.

§ Ezech. xvi. 13, 14.

|| Psalm xxxix. 2.

¶ Psalm xlix. 24.

again, "There shall be burning instead of beauty."*

Hence then we may see plainly, if we be so disposed, the true reason and deep ground, why the spiritual or regenerate life of man is, and needs must be a life of the most exquisite BEAUTY.

For the spiritual or regenerate life of man is a life derived from above, from God out of heaven. It may with the utmost propriety be called a descent of the form and order of heaven into human minds. True believers therefore, or they who receive in sincerity and obedience this heavenly life, form, and order, are said to be God's IMAGES and LIKENESSES. The reason is, their interiors are changed by the reception of such life, and form and order, from an infernal into an heavenly image and likeness. They are no longer therefore DEFORMED, as to their spirits, through the disorder of their lives, according to the ungodly image of pride, wrath, malice, envy, covetousness, or any other diabolical and ugly affections, but they are TRANSFORMED into an angelical BEAUTY, according to the pure and HEAVENLY FORMS of humility and meekness, love and charity, patience and contentedness, and every other Christian grace and living virtue.

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* Isaiah iii. 24.

Could a regenerate man, or a true Christian, therefore look into himself, and behold the interior form of his spirit, he would see there the most incomparable BEAUTY. He would behold the ANGEL OF HEAVEN already beginning to be fashioned in all his loveliness and grace of comeliness. He would be astonished at the perfection and excellence of the heavenly and immortal FORM. All the BEAUTY of this world, all the features and colouring of what is called admirable amongst men, would be DEFORMITY compared therewith. He would see in himself a living FORM and PORTRAIT of truth and virtue, a shadow of the first and sovereign BEAUTY, the great JEHOVAH, manifested SUPREME in the divine person of Jesus Christ, and from Him in all those who believe in Him and keep his commandments; for knowing that all truth and all virtue is of divine original, he would know also, that whosoever receives truth and virtue into his heart and understanding, and is formed thereby as to his life, must needs have an INTERNAL FORM agreeable to the Divine original thereof.

To conclude.—Many and important uses, beloved, are to be derived from the above doctrine, respecting the spiritual interior FORMS of our lives and spirits; but the present time will only permit me to exhort you to give it due and serious attention. For this purpose, let me admonish you to
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be often considering and reflecting well with yourselves, that you have SPIRITS as well as BODIES, SPIRITUAL FORMS as well as BODILY FORMS, consequently a SPIRITUAL BEAUTY OR DEFORMITY. Your bodies, if you think for a moment, you will find, make but a SMALL, or rather NO part of you. You need not therefore be at all concerned about their FORMS, whether they be deformed or beautiful, for they must soon moulder in the dust of the grave; they must soon be put off, and be no more yours than another person's. But the FORM of your spirits doth much concern you, for this is ETERNAL; this you must carry with you into another world; this can never die, and according to its form you will be for ever happy or miserable. You cannot indeed see with your corporeal eyes what the FORMS of your spirits are, as you can see what the FORMS of your bodies are, but you may see this with your spiritual eyes, and accordingly you may know with the utmost certainty, if you be so disposed, whether your spirits be DEFORMED OR BEAUTIFUL, UGLY OR GRACEFUL. As for example: if you find in yourselves that the OLD MAN is still alive, working in you according to the life, spirit, and temper of the natural or unregenerate mind, in pride and vanity, in malice and hatred, in worldly covetousness and inordinate affection, or other ungodly and unchristian lusts, you may then be fully assured, as if you saw it with

with your bodily eyes, that your spirits are DEFORMED, UGLY, MONSTROUS, and MISHAPEN, according to the most bestial, defiled, and infernal image. But on the contrary, if you find in yourselves that the NEW MAN is begun to live, or, in other words, that the life, spirit and tempers of the regenerate or renewed mind are revived in you, according to gospel humility and meekness, love and charity, patience and contentedness, submission and obedience to God in all things, you may then be alike assured, as if you saw it with your bodily eyes, that your spirits are transformed into an angelical FORM, BEAUTY, and LOVELINESS, and that in you is fulfilled the gracious promise in my text to all true believers, "To give unto them beauty for ashes."

S E R M O N XX.

Isaiah lxi.

To give unto them Beauty for Ashes.

IN a former discourse on these Words I endeavoured to shew how they are really and truly fulfilled in the mind or spirit of every sincere Christian in the regeneration, the natural or unregenerate life of man being a life of the utmost DEFORMITY, whilst on the contrary the spiritual or regenerate life is a life of the most heavenly and angelic BEAUTY.

I shall now proceed to point out, as was proposed, some important uses to be derived from this great scripture doctrine.

And first, it appears from hence that the interior FORMS of man's mind, or spirit, are in a continual state of CHANGEABLENESS, and this according to
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the state of his love and affections, and the thoughts, words and works thence derived.

Mankind, alas! in general think little about this; the reason is, mankind in general think more about their bodies and their bodily life, and are more concerned thereat, than about their spirits and spiritual life, and hence they are little attentive to the state of their spirits, and little solicitous about the FORMS thereof, whether they become daily more and more DEFORMED according to the natural and unregenerate image, or more and more BEAUTIFUL according to the spiritual and regenerate image.

But, beloved, let me caution you earnestly against such a carnal indifference respecting your spirits, and your spiritual FORMS OF LIFE, under the full assurance that your spirits and their spiritual FORMS are ALL that properly belong to you, and constitute what you call YOURSELVES, and that your bodies and their forms are comparatively as nothing and of no account to you.

And when you are thus fully assured, let me next suggest to you a truth of the deepest concern and moment, viz. that your immortal spirits and their INTERNAL FORMS are in a continual state of change, either to a greater and more infernal DEFORMITY, or to a higher and more angelic state of BEAUTY and loveliness.

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As thus—your spirits have in them a life, or living principle, which life or living principle consists of an infinite variety of affections and thoughts, giving birth daily and hourly to a variety as infinite of words and actions.

Now every affection and thought, let it be well noted, has its peculiar FORM, and leaves the impression of that its form, wheresoever it is cherished and received. Every word and action also, as proceeding from some affection and thought, has its peculiar spiritual form, and impresses that same form in the spirit whence it proceeds.

Apprehend it therefore well, and ponder it in your hearts—You cannot be affected with any thing, you cannot think, you cannot speak, you cannot move your hand to do a single act, howsoever seemingly indifferent, but you are always changing the internal form of your spirits, and this either to infernal DEFORMITY, or to heavenly BEAUTY, according to the ground, nature, and quality of such your affections, thoughts, words, and actions.

If therefore you are carnal and worldly-minded, and if in consequence thereof your affections, thoughts, words, and works, are sensual, selfish, vain, irregular, disorderly, according to the spirit of this world, and the unrenewed or unregenerate life; in this case, every desire, every thought,

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every word, and every work leaves in you the impression of its ungodly and INFERNAL FORM, and is ever adding somewhat to the natural IMAGE OF DEFORMITY to render it more DEFORMED.

But on the contrary—if you are spiritual and heavenly-minded, having a sincere respect to the laws and spirit, the order and life of heaven; and if in consequence thereof, your affections, thoughts, words, and actions are humble, just, holy, regular, and orderly, according to the pure love of God, and the renewed or regenerate life thence derived; in this case every tendency of desire and of thought, together with every word and work, makes its heavenly impression, and the angelic image of INWARD BEAUTY, grace and loveliness is daily improving and perfecting.

And what an importance, beloved, is derived from this consideration to all your affections, thoughts, words, and works! Oh, may you be led to ponder it seriously as it deserves! And whatsoever affection henceforth arises in your minds, before you give it place, be at the pains to enquire concerning its FORM; ask whether it be angelic or infernal, an image of heaven or of hell; do the same with your thoughts; and never indulge a single one, howsoever trifling or indifferent it may appear, till you know clearly its IMAGE, FACE, OF COUNTENANCE, whether UGLY OR BEAUTIFUL;
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extend the same rule also to your words and actions ; never speak, till you have considered what is the INTERNAL FORM of your speech ; and never stir a finger to action till you have well apprehended also its INWARD FIGURE OR PORTRAITURE, and how it appears in the sight of God and his angels. Thus will you learn to know yourselves, and your own real FORMS, and if you will deal herein sincerely with yourselves, discerning between the DEFORMED and the BEAUTIFUL, the INFERNAL and the HEAVENLY, you may rest fully assured, that every affection, every thought, every word, and every work of your lives, is daily, hourly, and continually adding somewhat to the perfection of that spiritual form of which it is written, " So " shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty.*"

But secondly. Another important use to be derived from the above doctrine is this. Our state in eternity will depend upon the FORM which our spirits acquire during our residence in the natural body here below ; or, in other words, we shall live eternally associated hereafter according to our spiritual FORMS, with wicked and infernal spirits, if the FORM of our spirits be such, but with pure and angelical spirits, if our spiritual FORMS, bear resemblance to theirs.

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* Psal. xlv. 12.

We may see an illustration of this truth in what is observable here below, respecting the association of the inferior creatures according to their FORMS. Sheep love to associate with sheep, and wolves with wolves; lions with lions, and lambs with lambs. Who ever saw a raven or an owl in association with doves? or who ever saw a dove delight to join itself to owls or ravens? All the inferior creatures are delighted with their own RESEMBLANCES, and they cannot delight to live in association with any other, and herein they read a lesson of deep and heavenly wisdom to man, if he would open his eyes and his ears to understand and profit by it.

For it is just so with the spirits of men. Each loves, and is in spiritual association with its own FORM, and must of necessity dwell to eternity according to such association, inasmuch as its ruling delight is there. If it be in form a SHEEP or a LAMB, it is with the SHEEP and the LAMBS on the LORD'S RIGHT HAND, and must of necessity forever have its happy lot amongst them. But if it be in form a wolf or a goat, it is then with the wolves and the goats on the LORD'S LEFT HAND, and with them also it must abide for ever. Who can bear to think of a sheep being amongst goats, or of a goat amongst sheep? of a lamb amongst wolves, or of a wolf amongst lambs? Such therefore as the internal form of man's spirit is, such is
his

his spiritual association, and such must it remain to be to all eternity.

Beloved, let me earnestly press upon you a serious attention to this awful and awakening consideration. There hath prevailed, alas! in too many minds a groundless delusive opinion, that their state in eternity will depend upon some mere arbitrary act of divine mercy, and that all may be admitted thereby to association with the blessed in God's kingdom, without any respect to the particular state, FORM, or quality of their spirits, as derived from their lives or living principles.

But how is the fallacy and vanity of this opinion detected and exposed by what has been just now observed concerning spiritual association! For if all are to be in a state hereafter according to their spiritual FORMS; and if these FORMS will depend upon the ruling affections, thoughts, words, and works of each particular spirit, during its life in the body here below, then how plain is it to see that every spirit will have a state or place hereafter, not according to any arbitrary act of divine omnipotence and mercy, but according to its own ruling affections, thoughts, words and works, by and agreeable to which its INTERNAL FORM has been determined and fixed?

Let this then, beloved, be further well noted and registered in the mind's remembrance. You are daily determining or deciding your unchangeable

able lot hereafter in the eternal world, and this according to the FORMS impressed daily on your immortal spirits. Every moment of your lives, and the circumstances of every moment, affect your spiritual association, and fix you either in closer conjunction with the SHEEP ON THE LORD'S RIGHT HAND, or with the GOATS ON THE LEFT. This association therefore will not depend upon, or be decided by, any arbitrary sentence to be pronounced hereafter, but it depends upon, and is continually decided by, the FORMATION of your internal lives or spirits in this world, whether such formation be according to an ungodly or to an heavenly image and likeness. If then your affections and thoughts, your words and works be such as to impress upon your spirits an IMAGE OF DEFORMITY AND UGLINESS, let it be remembered well, you are in such case daily associating yourselves with like FORMS in the eternal world, and your everlasting lot must needs be amongst them. But if your affections and thoughts, together with your words and works be such as to impress daily upon your spirits an IMAGE OF HEAVENLY BEAUTY AND LOVELINESS, let it be alike remembered that in this case you are daily associating yourselves with like angelic forms in God's kingdom, and your everlasting lot will assuredly be amongst such your own resemblances.

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To conclude. Our blessed Lord, speaking of the disclosure of secret things which is to take place in the judgment of the great day, has these remarkable words, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops."*

Many have been led to suppose that these words will be accomplished according to the LETTER, and that in the day of judgment there will be a loud publication made, as from an HOUSE-TOP, of every one's secret thoughts and purposes, which they have given birth to and nourished during their life in the body.

But, beloved, give me leave to suggest, that such a publication will be altogether unnecessary, inasmuch as from what hath been above said concerning man's SPIRITUAL FORM, it must needs appear that by such FORM ALONE all the secret purposes, thoughts, words and works of his life will be disclosed and made manifest.

There will be no occasion therefore for the angels of God hereafter to proclaim aloud either our vices or our virtues; our guilt or our innocence; whether

* Luke xii. 2, 3.

whether we have lived contrary to the spirit of the gospel, or agreeable thereto; whether we have loved God and one another, as disciples of the holy Jesus, or have loved the world and ourselves alone, like the deluded children of this world. There will be no occasion, I say, for the angels to proclaim and publish this aloud through the eternal world, for we shall publish it ourselves; we shall proclaim it whithersoever we go; inasmuch as we shall carry the impressions thereof in our FACES; it will be written upon our HANDS and upon our FEET; every FORM, every MEMBER, every ORGAN, every LOOK and GESTURE of our spiritual bodies will declare what our lives have been; and not a single good or evil affection, thought, word, or work, in which we have taken pleasure, and found our life's delight, will be omitted, but all will remain written in indelible characters on our spiritual and eternal FORMS.

Beloved, may this awful consideration have its due influence and effect upon us! and as we wish that our resurrection bodies and the FORMS thereof should appear hereafter, so let us be careful now to form and fashion our lives, remembering, that all our works will thus go along with us into eternity, and we must, in this manner, GIVE ACCOUNT OF EVERY IDLE WORD THAT WE SPEAK, in the day of judgment. May we then so begin to labour now after the attainment of the true evangelical spirit
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of love and charity, meekness and humility, patience and purity, that our internal spiritual FORMS, may be thereby so changed and renewed, that when we come into another world, it may be seen we have been sincere followers of our Lord in the regeneration, and have attained to the accomplishment of this truly blessed promise. "To give
" unto them beauty for ashes!

ON THE
TRUE NATURE
OF
HEAVENLY WISDOM,

IN TWO SERMONS.

SERMON XX.

Pfalm xc. 12.

So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto
Wisdom.

WE have often taken occasion to observe, that in every part of the Word of God there is contained a two-fold sense, or signification, a SPIRITUAL sense, and a NATURAL sense, the first adapted to the understanding and instruction of the SPIRITUAL man, and the second adapted to the understanding and instruction of the NATURAL man. This is remarkably the case with

with the words of my text; they also contain this TWO-FOLD sense, adapted to the use of these two sorts of persons, and therefore are apprehended accordingly. Thus by DAYS here spoken of, and by NUMBERING OUR DAYS, the spiritual and the natural man apprehend quite different things. Nevertheless each apprehend, in such a manner as may be profitable for him, and conducive to his salvation, provided he does but LIVE a LIFE agreeable to such his apprehension. For the Word of God is adapted to all states of men, and to all states of man's being, to give instruction in all, from the lowest to the highest, and thus to bring salvation, or, what is the same thing, open the life and order of heaven to all; nevertheless, with this condition, that all are careful to conform their lives to such instruction communicated; otherwise, though LIGHT be given, SALVATION cannot be given, or, in other words, heaven cannot be opened, inasmuch as salvation is effected with every one, and heaven is opened, so far only as each is obedient in his life to the light he receives.

How the words of my text, like all the other parts of holy scripture, are adapted to these blessed purposes, I propose in my following discourse to enquire, by shewing

First, In what sense they are apprehended by the NATURAL man, and how they are designed to affect his life; and

Secondly,

Secondly, In what sense they are apprehended by the SPIRITUAL man, and how they were intended to affect his life.

First then, we shall consider in what sense the words of my text are apprehended by the NATURAL man, and how they are designed to affect his life.

When the natural man reads or hears these words, "So teach us to number our days," &c. he is led hereby to think of the shortness and uncertainty of his present natural life; for by DAYS he understands NATURAL DAYS, or portions of NATURAL TIME, and by NUMBERING these DAYS he understands the making a right estimate, or forming a right apprehension of their number and duration, or HOW LONG HE HAS TO LIVE.

Thus the natural man is led by these words to bethink him of the fleeting transitory state of the things of this world, and of all his concerns therein, and how soon the present state of things must be left by him, with all its engagements, business, and connections. Hence he is led to reflect further on eternity, or that state of being which will succeed the present state of temporary existence. The great realities of another world are hereby brought before his view. He anticipates, as it were, the effects of that awful change which is so soon to take place. Death, judgment, heaven and hell, are all presented before him; and he is
anxious

anxious about his own lot, what it will be when these things come to pass. Thus (so powerful is the Word of God) by this short prayer, "So teach us to number our days," &c. the natural man is led to look beyond this world into another, and, passing through the things of time, to take a view of the things of eternity.

But this is not all. According to this apprehension which the natural man conceives of the sense of these words are the saving effects intended thereby to be produced in his heart and life.

Supposing, therefore, that he is obedient to the import of these words, agreeable to his apprehension of them, they will lead him to fashion his life accordingly. He will thus APPLY HIS HEART UNTO TRUE WISDOM. He will no longer be deluded by the false and flattering appearances of mere worldly happiness. Having his eyes open to the littleness and uncertainty of this world, and to the greatness and realities of that eternal state which is to succeed, he will never rest till he has secured his interests beyond the grave. This will of necessity lead his heart to seek after God; to study his holy Word; to learn the laws of that invisible kingdom of which he is so soon to become a member; to live a life according to those laws; to watch over himself and the corrupt affections of his own heart; to seek every opportunity of advancement in the divine grace and fa-

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your. In short, by thus learning TO NUMBER HIS DAYS, he will by degrees become a NEW MAN, and APPLYING HIS HEART MORE AND MORE UNTO WISDOM, he will grow more and more in NEWNESS OF LIFE; till from a merely NATURAL man he becomes SPIRITUAL, and is thereby fitted for the enjoyments of a spiritual and eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Thus then are the words of my text apprehended by the natural man; and thus, according to his apprehension of them, if he be faithful thereto, do they prove to him words of salvation, by converting him from sin and vanity unto God, and thus bringing God and heaven, salvation and eternal life near unto him.

Lct us now see, as was proposed, secondly, how these same words are apprehended by the SPIRITUAL man, and what effect they were intended to have upon his life, according to such apprehension.

When the spiritual man reads or hears these words, "So teach us to number our days," he doth not by DAYS understand NATURAL DAYS, nor of consequence by NUMBERING HIS DAYS does he understand the numbering the days of his natural life; but by DAYS he here understands SPIRITUAL DAYS, and by NUMBERING HIS DAYS he understands the noting or taking an account of the DAYS of his spiritual life.

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It may possibly seem strange to some to hear of SPIRITUAL DAYS, and of the NUMBERING or noting such days in themselves; but this can only be the case with those who have never duly considered the sense of the word DAY or DAYS, as used in holy scripture.

For the benefit therefore of such, I shall here adduce a few passages out of the Word of God, where the term DAY OR DAYS is used manifestly according to this spiritual sense and signification.

Thus our Lord saith, "I must work the work of him that sent me whilst it is DAY, the NIGHT cometh when no man can work;"* where it must be very evident that by DAY and NIGHT are not meant day and night in a natural but in a spiritual sense.

So again, the Apostle saith, speaking of true believers, "Ye are all the children of the LIGHT, and the children of the DAY; we are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore let us who are of the DAY be sober."† And again, "The NIGHT is far spent, the DAY is at hand."‡ To the same purpose St. Peter speaks, "We have also a more sure Word of prophesy, unto which ye do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the DAY DAWN, and THE

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* John ix. 4.

† 1 Thess. v. 5, 6.

‡ Rom. xiii. 12.

"DAY-STAR arise in your hearts;"* in all which passages, it must be very plain, by DAY is meant not natural but spiritual DAY, which St. Peter therefore describes as ARISING IN THE HEARTS of true believers.

It is in this sense of the word DAY, that the Almighty is said to "know the DAYS of the godly;"† and that the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ is called "the day-spring which from on high hath visited us;"‡ and that the coming of Jesus Christ to be a Saviour and Redeemer, is called "the day of Jehovah and the day of Salvation."§

From this spiritual sense then of the word DAY or DAYS, as used in holy scripture, it may appear plain to every considerate person, how the spiritual man apprehends these words of the psalmist, "So teach us to number our days;" and how he is affected thereby as to his life.

By DAYS he understands every appearance, manifestation, or dawning of the divine mercy, the divine love, the divine goodness, the divine truth, or the divine light in his own mind, as arising from his reception of, and obedience to, the Word of God, from which every such divine manifestation

* 2 Peter i. 19.

† Psalm xxxvii. 18.

‡ Luke i. 7, 8.

§ See Joel ii. 11. 31. Amos v. 18. Zeph. i. 7. 14. 2 Corinth. vi. 2. and other places.

tion proceeds. By NUMBERING these DAYS he understands the NOTING or taking account of them; or, in other words, attending to them in himself, so as to distinguish the qualities of each, and to discern especially between the DAY and the NIGHT, between the LIGHT and the DARKNESS.

Such is the apprehension of the spiritual man with respect to his DAYS. He doth not reckon or number his DAYS by the risings or settings of the sun of this world only, and by the light and darkness thereby occasioned; but he numbers and reckons them by the risings and settings of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS in his own mind, and by the light and darkness thereby occasioned in his understanding; or, in other words, he numbers and reckons them by the manifestations of the divine mercy and truth from Jesus Christ in his inner man, which is what St. Peter calls the DAY DAWNING, and THE DAY-STAR ARISING IN THE HEART. Thus when he finds himself affected with tender love towards God and his neighbour, and with the light of wisdom attending such love, he calls it DAY; but if he finds in himself no such love, but a love contrary thereto, which is the love of himself, of the world, or of the flesh, he calls this NIGHT.

And according to this apprehension which the spiritual man thus conceives of the word DAYS, as
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used in my text, is the effect produced thereby, or intended to be produced in his life.

For praying constantly to God, and being in consequence thereof ever taught of God, thus TO NUMBER HIS DAYS, if he be obedient, he is led thereby to continual watchfulness over the state of his own mind, to observe whether it be in good or in evil, in light or in darkness. He knows that all good and all light cometh from above, that is, from God, and that all evil and all darkness cometh from beneath, that is, from the selfish, worldly, and carnal affections, separate from God. Thus by NUMBERING HIS DAYS he is led continually to purify his heart more and more from all the evil affections, that so his love towards God and his neighbour may be more and more perfect, regular, and enlightened. Hence he advances daily in the christian graces of humility, self-abasement, purification, and separation from evil, real conversion to God, and pure obedience to the spirit of his commandments, inasmuch as he knows by joyful experience, that the exercise of these virtues tends to make his DAYS longer and brighter and more joyous, by dispersing all those thick and gross clouds which separate between him and the Sun of righteousness. In short, by thus numbering his days, he is taught indeed TO APPLY HIS HEART UNTO WISDOM, even that wisdom which

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IS FROM ABOVE, AND WHICH IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE ENTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY; and, walking in this wisdom, he verifies finally that description given of the just one in the language of the wise man of old, that his "path is
" as a shining light, shining more and more unto
" the perfect day."*

To conclude. May what hath been said be profitable unto all! Are there any here present, who are still in a natural state, having not as yet attained unto spiritual life and spiritual understanding, to such let me earnestly recommend the devout use of the holy man's prayer in my text, "So
" teach us to number our days," &c. Let them make this the habitual prayer of their minds, till they find it begins to take effect, by leading them to look through time into eternity, and to see the comparative nothing of the former, and the All of the latter. Let them then begin to live accordingly, endeavouring to wean their affections from temporal things, and to fix them on eternal, by looking unto God and his law; by labouring to love God and their neighbour; by renouncing all sin and vanity opposite to such love. And let
them

* Prov. iv. 18,

them not doubt but by continuing so to live, they will soon experience a happy change from natural to spiritual, from children of this world to children of God, and heirs of immortality.

And to such amongst you, beloved, as are already spiritual, let me also recommend the devout use of the same heavenly prayer, "So teach us to number our days," &c. Learn hereby to note well all the appearances and manifestations of the divine light and love in your own minds, together with their opposites. Mark carefully and attend to whatever causes DARKNESS and NIGHT, and be sure to trace it up to its true source. Separate thus between the DAY and the NIGHT, the LIGHT and the DARKNESS in yourselves, and learn to say of the DAY and of the LIGHT, it is from above, from God out of heaven; but say of the NIGHT and of the DARKNESS, it is from beneath, from the selfish, worldly, and carnal principles of my nature. Let this consideration have its full and proper effect. Let it lead you to a more thorough humiliation and purification of yourselves before God, that so you may be more thoroughly penetrated with the pure love of him and of your neighbour, and with a consequent pure light and understanding of the truth of his holy Word. And doubt not, but if you thus continue to NUMBER YOUR DAYS, and TO APPLY YOUR HEARTS UNTO THIS WISDOM, it will.

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will sooner or later bring you to that city and country, where shall be no NIGHT, but where there is one continual everlasting DAY; when
“ your sun shall no more go down, neither shall
“ your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall
“ be your everlasting light, and the days of your
“ mourning shall be ended.”* AMEN.

* Isaiah lx. 20.

SER.

S E R M O N XXI.

Pfalm xc. 12.

So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto
Wisdom.

IN a former discourse on these words we have endeavoured to shew what is here meant by NUMBERING OUR DAYS, and how this expression is differently understood by the natural man and the spiritual. The NATURAL man by DAYS understands the days of his natural life, and by NUMBERING these DAYS he understands the making a right estimation of the shortness and uncertainty of his abode in this world. / Whereas the spiritual man by his DAYS understands the DAYS of his spiritual life, and by NUMBERING these his DAYS he understands the taking an account of, or noting in himself the various states of his spiritual life. In both cases however it was shown how profitable is the prayer, "Teach us to number our days," inasmuch as both the natural and spiritual man are hereby

hereby led, each according to his state, and according to his apprehension, to APPLY HIS HEART UNTO WISDOM, and thereby attain unto eternal life and peace.

Having thus then shown what is meant in the words of my text by NUMBERING OUR DAYS, I shall now proceed to shew further what is meant and implied by APPLYING OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM.

And herein I shall follow the plan before pursued. viz. of pointing out the different senses and significations of this expression, in regard to the NATURAL and the SPIRITUAL man; for as these two sorts of men, according to what has been already shown, have very different apprehensions respecting their DAYS and NUMBERING their DAYS, so have they also very different apprehensions respecting WISDOM, and APPLYING THEIR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM.

I shall begin with the NATURAL man, pointing out first, his apprehensions of what is meant by WISDOM, and by APPLYING HIS HEART thereto.

Now the idea or apprehension of the natural man concerning WISDOM is, that it consists in much knowledge treasured up in the memory and understanding; especially in the knowledge of the things of God and of his eternal kingdom.

He makes no distinction, therefore, between WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE; he believes that whoever

foever KNOWS much, must of consequence be WISE; and that the sure way to attain unto WISDOM is, to collect in his understanding various notions, opinions, and speculations suggested by others.

Under this apprehension of what is meant by WISDOM, when the natural man by NUMBERING HIS DAYS is led to APPLY HIS HEART thereto, he begins with acquiring much knowledge, and especially the knowledge of the things of God and of his kingdom. Impressed with an awful sense of the concerns of eternity, he sees it dangerous to remain any longer ignorant respecting his eternal state of being. A zealous desire is enkindled in him to become acquainted with divine and heavenly things; to hear some tidings concerning heaven and hell, and a life after death; to learn the laws of God's invisible kingdom; to study the nature of his own being, and of his present and future existence; in short, to acquire all that heavenly knowledge and instruction, which may conduce to his salvation, and serve to direct him safely in his passage through this world of short duration, into that eternal world which his heart now begins to pant after and labour to secure.

Under the influence of this zealous desire, he applies himself much to diligent reading the Word of God and other holy books. He attends constantly all places of heavenly instruction. He meditates

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meditates much in his own mind on heavenly things. He takes all occasions of improving his knowledge by conversing with others on serious subjects, whom he thinks capable of instructing him. In the language of the wise man, "he crieth after knowledge, and lifteth up his voice for understanding; he seeketh her as silver, and searcheth for her as for hid treasures."* In short, whether alone or in company, he takes every opportunity of advancing in religious knowledge, and of storing up in his mind all those maxims of heavenly wisdom and understanding, which may tend to make his eternal state blessed, and to direct him better in his way to the kingdom of God.

Such is the natural man's apprehension of wisdom, and of the nature and manner of APPLYING HIS HEART thereto. And so far all is well with him, and he is in a sure and certain way to eternal happiness, provided he be but careful to LIVE according to the knowledge which he thus acquires. On this, however, it is well to be observed, will depend the efficacy of his knowledge; for knowledge, even of the most holy things, and of all the mysteries of heaven itself, cannot save man, unless there be a CONFORMITY OF LIFE to the dictates thereof. Knowledge is indeed neces-

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* Prov. ii. 3, 4.

sary for salvation, and therefore whosoever is saved is inspired of God with a longing desire or affection for heavenly knowledge, and pursues and acquires it accordingly; but then, it should never be forgotten, it is not the KNOWLEDGE which of itself is saving, but it is the LIFE which is in agreement with the KNOWLEDGE; and herein KNOWLEDGE differs from true WISDOM. Knowledge may exist without a conformity of life thereto, in which case it is not wisdom; but being practised in obedience of life, it then becomes wisdom, and in this case WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE are ONE.

This however will appear more plainly and clearly by considering in the second place, as was proposed, what is the spiritual man's apprehension of the WISDOM spoken of in my text, and of APPLYING HIS HEART thereto.

The SPIRITUAL man, convinced by numbering HIS DAYS, of the greatness and reality of the things of God and eternity, and of the comparative littleness and vanity of all other things, APPLIES HIS HEART diligently unto WISDOM, but then it is a WISDOM altogether different from that of the natural man.

He doth not call it wisdom to KNOW much, to be learned in notions, in doctrines, and opinions; no, not even to be acquainted with the mysteries of heaven, and all the sublimest truths relating to
 God

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God and his kingdom; for he sees it is possible for man to have such KNOWLEDGE, and yet not live in conformity to it; and knowledge without a conformity of life, he is convinced is not wisdom.

The spiritual man therefore distinguishes well in himself betwixt KNOWLEDGE and WISDOM; to knowledge, separated from obedience, or a life of charity, he does not allow the name of WISDOM; but knowledge, joined with obedience, or the life of charity, this he calls the TRUE WISDOM, acceptable to God, and profitable to man.

In APPLYING HIS HEART therefore unto WISDOM, the spiritual man labours to live in conformity to whatever he knows respecting God and the things of his kingdom; he is careful and diligent to practise all that he hath been taught; in the language of the apostle he SHEWETH HIS FAITH BY HIS WORKS, or in other words, he manifests and realizes his knowledge, his opinions, and his thoughts, by his life and actions.

The spiritual man therefore would rather be found OBEDIENT than learned; he would rather be HUMBLE at the feet of Jesus Christ as a sincere PENITENT, than sit in the midst of the DOCTORS HEARING and ASKING QUESTIONS. He gives to charity the pre-eminence over all knowledge and speculative opinions. It gives him more solid satisfaction to feel in himself the impressions of a

godlike nature, which is the true love of God and of his neighbour, than to be acquainted with the deepest mysteries of all SCIENCE. To watch therefore over himself and the bad passions of his own heart; to search out and repent of his sins before God; to correct hereby the depravities, corruptions, and disorders of his own fallen nature; to grow in the humble graces and virtues of the christian life; to cherish in himself the secret and life-giving influences of God's holy spirit; to be transformed thus from earthly to heavenly; from a creature of this world to be made a child of God and an heir of eternal life; in short, to become fashioned in the divine image and likeness, and enter daily into a nearer conjunction with the great God and Redeemer, and his kingdom, by a thorough obedience to all the laws, precepts, and ordinances of his holy word; this is what the spiritual man calls WISDOM, and THAT to which he continually applies both his heart and life.

It is not however to be understood, as if the spiritual man despised and made light of KNOWLEDGE; or as if he considered matters of opinion, of doctrine, and of speculation as things indifferent. This is far from being the case; he despises no knowledge which is excellent and praiseworthy. He greatly reverences and esteems all pure truths, whether natural or spiritual. He labours

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bours to form his own understanding accordingly, and would hold himself highly culpable was he to refuse any instruction which it is in his power to attain. He is diligent therefore in STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD, and in acquiring thence solid principles of heavenly knowledge. He cultivates also an acquaintance with wise men, and with the books which they have written, for the better information of his own mind, and the correcting of his judgment. But then he does all this, not with a view to advance merely in knowledge, or to indulge an idle curiosity; still less, for the sake of worldly gain or reputation in the eyes of men; but he does it for the end above mentioned, viz. that he may know more and more of the ways and the works of God, and of the things of his kingdom, and thus be led to know more of himself, and by knowing more of himself, to grow every day more humble, more penitent, more charitable, more heavenly-minded, in short, more like JESUS CHRIST, through an entire conformity of his whole life to the spirit, temper, word, precept, and example of this perfect pattern of all wisdom.

To conclude, Let me earnestly press upon you, beloved, from what hath been now said, the due consideration of what is meant by true wisdom, and in what it consists. For this purpose learn to

distinguish well in yourselves between WISDOM and mere KNOWLEDGE. Mere KNOWLEDGE is a light of the understanding only, which it is possible may be separated from GOOD LIFE; but WISDOM is knowledge brought into life, and always connected with it. Very bad and wicked men therefore may have much KNOWLEDGE, yea, even of holy and divine things; but none but good and godlike men can have WISDOM. KNOWLEDGE may be proud, worldly-minded, carnal, covetous, yea, even infernal, for the devils also we know have much knowledge; but WISDOM is ever humble, heavenly-minded, spiritual, peaceable, pure, charitable, and angelic, for the angels we know are forms of WISDOM. KNOWLEDGE can thus look two ways, either to this world and the flesh, or unto God and heaven; but WISDOM can only look one way, and that way is unto God. KNOWLEDGE may become an impure HARLOT, instead of being the LAMB'S BRIDE, but WISDOM is the pure BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE. KNOWLEDGE, in short, may be compared to the NEEDLEWORK and FINE LINEN WHITE AND CLEAN, with which the bride of the lamb is arrayed; but WISDOM is the BRIDE herself, THE LAMB'S WIFE ADORNED TO MEET HER HUSBAND. Knowledge again may in some cases be compared to that tree placed in paradise, of which it is written, "In
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“ the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely
 “ die ;” for such is the knowledge of those, who
 are not obedient to what they know ; but wisdom
 may be compared to the TREE OF LIFE in the
 midst of Paradise, yea, it is itself that tree.

Nevertheless, despise not KNOWLEDGE, for with-
 out KNOWLEDGE you can never attain unto wis-
 dom. Beg of God therefore most earnestly to
 give you KNOWLEDGE ; search for it in his word,
 and in his works ; and in the words and works of
 all those that are enlightened of him ; dig for it as
 FOR HIDDEN TREASURE, that is MORE PRECIOUS
 THAN RUBIES, and with which ALL THE THINGS
 THAT THOU CANST DESIRE ARE NOT TO BE COM-
 PARED. But then, remember well, and never
 forget the END. All true knowledge is from God,
 it points to God, and is intended to lead you un-
 to God ; it is intended therefore to make you like
 God ; but this it cannot do unless you LIVE ac-
 cordingly. Join therefore to your knowledge,
 obedience of life. As you grow in understanding,
 be careful to grow also in divine grace. Let self-
 examination, sincere repentance, continual watch-
 fulness, deep humiliation, and fervent charity
 ever attend your knowledge, and be exalted to
 pre-eminence above it. Be thus WISE AS SER-
 PENTS, and HARMLESS AS DOVES. Your know-
 ledge will then finally become wisdom, and wis-
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dom is the child of God; and has its everlasting dwelling with God in his kingdom; and as you APPLY YOUR HEARTS THERETO, you will also become the children of God, being children of wisdom, and your abode will be with God for ever in heaven. AMEN.

FINIS.

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